

The Amateurs
A Complete Guide for Non-Professional
Dramatic Organizations

by

William Hunter Perry, Jr.

AM
1947
pe

BOSTON UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS
LIBRARY

Gift of the Author

BOSTON UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL

Thesis
THE AMATEURS
A COMPLETE GUIDE FOR NON-PROFESSIONAL
DRAMATIC ORGANIZATIONS

by
William Hunter Perry, Jr.
(A. B. Bowdoin College, 1933)

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts
1947

SECRET

NO

ENGINEERING

FOR THE
CONSTRUCTION

SECTION

ENGINEERING

FOR THE CONSTRUCTION

ENGINEERING

A B C D E

SECRET

ENGINEERING

FOR THE CONSTRUCTION

ENGINEERING

FOR THE CONSTRUCTION

ENGINEERING

FOR THE CONSTRUCTION

SECTION

FOR THE CONSTRUCTION

A B C D E

30
AM 1947
re

11

Approved by:

First Reader

Irving H. White

Professor of English

Second Reader

Gerald H. Brace

Professor of English

OFFICE OF THE
 SECRETARY OF THE
 BOARD OF REGENTS

Approved by:

James H. McKittrick
 First Reader
 Professor of English

Frank M. Johnson
 Second Reader
 Professor of English

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Preface	v
CHAPTER	
I. THE REASON	1
II. IN RETROSPECT	5
III. THE IDEA	10
IV. PLAY SELECTION	17
V. THE PRODUCER	31
VI. THE DIRECTOR	35
VII. THE STAGE SETTING	44
VIII. STAGE LIGHTING	64
IX. THE PROPERTY MANAGER	73
X. THE STAGE MANAGER AND MINOR FUNCTIONARIES	81
XI. THE BUSINESS MANAGER	87
XII. THE DRESS REHEARSAL	96
XIII. THE PERFORMANCE	102
XIV. THE MOPPING UP	107
XV. CONCLUSION	110
ABSTRACT	114
BIBLIOGRAPHY	119

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

7	INTRODUCTION
1	I. THE PROLOGUE
3	II. IN RETROSPECT
10	III. THE TUNE
17	IV. PLAY SELECTION
21	V. THE PROGRAM
28	VI. THE DIRECTOR
44	VII. THE STAGE SETTING
64	VIII. STAGE LIGHTING
73	IX. THE PROPERTY MANAGER
81	X. THE STAGE MANAGER AND HIS ASSISTANTS
87	XI. THE BUSINESS MANAGER
96	XII. THE DRESS MATERIAL
103	XIII. THE PERFORMANCE
107	XIV. THE MORNING UP
110	XV. CONCLUSION
114	APPENDIX
118	BIBLIOGRAPHY

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE	PAGE
1. Example of a Typical Dramatic Club Constitution	14
2. Stage Setting Illustrating Detail Possible on a Small Stage	21
3. Stage Setting for <u>Your Uncle Dudley</u>	28
4. Drawing Showing Detail of Flat Scenery Construc- tion	47
5. Drawing Showing Detail of Lash Line and Stage Brace	51
6. Drawing Showing Stairway Arrangements	56
7. Scale Model of Setting for <u>Berkeley Square</u>	61
8. Stage Setting for <u>The Play's the Thing</u>	69
9. Example of Typical Property List	76
10. Example of Typical Lighting and Sound Effect Cue Sheet	79
11. Example of Typical Programs	90
12. Example of Typical Business Manager's Statement	94
13. Example of Questionnaire for Determining Prefer- ences of Public	105
14. Example of Typical Seasonal Prospectus	112

LIST OF FIGURES

PAGE	FIGURE
14	1. Example of a Typical Typical Club Constitution
21	2. Stage Setting Illustrating Detail Possible on a Small Stage
28	3. Stage Setting for <u>Four Uncle Dugley</u>
37	4. Drawing Showing Detail of First Secondary Construction
42	5. Drawing Showing Detail of Last Line and Stage
51	6. Drawing Showing Secondary Arrangements
56	7. Stage Model of Setting for <u>Perkley's House</u>
61	8. Stage Setting for <u>The Play's the Thing</u>
69	9. Example of Typical Property List
76	10. Example of Typical Lighting and Sound Effect Cue Sheet
82	11. Example of Typical Programs
87	12. Example of Typical Business Manager's Statement
94	13. Example of Questionnaire for Determining Preferences of Public
102	14. Example of Typical Seasonal Program

Preface

This book is being written for amateur dramatic organizations which are still in their infancy. Much of the information contained in it can be found in other publications, but not in any single publication. Parts of it, such as the appointment of a producer, certain aspects of scenery construction, and a number of suggested methods of improvisation, are, to the best of the author's knowledge, original. Many of the other important ideas, while not completely original, have been ignored entirely or merely mentioned in passing in other books. Specific references to sources of additional information are given throughout, and although no mention has been made of many good authorities, the omission is intentional lest the reader be confused by too many recommendations. Complete details concerning the books mentioned in the text can be found in the Bibliography.

Preface

This book is being written for the purpose of presenting information which is still in their infancy. Much of the information contained in it can be found in other publications, but not in any single publication. It is of the nature of a supplement to a treatise, certain aspects of history, and a number of specialized methods of investigation, are, to the best of the author's knowledge, original. Many of the other important ideas, while not completely original, have been treated entirely or merely mentioned in passing in other books. Special references to sources of additional information are given throughout, and although no mention has been made of many good authorities, the omission is intentional. It is the author's conviction that too many recommendations, especially in the case of certain books mentioned in this text can be found in the bibliography.

CHAPTER I

THE REASON

Much has been written, perhaps far too much, about the production of plays by both professionals and amateurs. The great volume of these writings offers a discouraging prospect to enthusiastic amateurs who are seeking practical guidance in their efforts to stage a successful play. The greatest problem is one of selection. Which books are practical? Which books are worthwhile? This is an attempt at an all-inclusive guide for those who seek the answer to these questions.

THE REASON

To make use of this book one does not need talent. He needs only to retain his enthusiasm and to use a minimum of common sense. He need not be a representative of a wealthy dramatic association to which considerations of expense or elaborateness of production present no obstacles. Perhaps there are such organizations. I have never had the privilege of being associated with one; in fact, I have never even heard of one.

I am writing for the people referred to in Everyman's Drama, in particular for the vast majority who are members of "small obscure clubs":

There are throughout the country countless Dramatic Groups ranging from small, obscure clubs

THE BOY BOND

CHAPTER I

CHAPTER I

THE REASON

THE BOY BOND

CHAPTER I

THE REASON

Much has been written, perhaps far too much, about the production of plays by both professionals and amateurs. The great volume of these writings offers a discouraging prospect to enthusiastic amateurs who are seeking practical guidance in their efforts to stage a successful play. The greatest problem is one of selection. Which books are practical? Which books are worthwhile? This is an attempt at an all-inclusive guide for those who seek the answer to such questions.

To make use of this book one does not need talent. He needs only to retain his enthusiasm and to use a modicum of common sense. He need not be a representative of a wealthy dramatic association to which considerations of expense or elaborateness of production present no obstacles. Perhaps there are such organizations. I have never had the privilege of being associated with one; in fact, I have never even heard of one.

I am writing for the people referred to in Everyman's Drama, in particular for the vast majority who are members of "small obscure clubs":

There are throughout the country countless Dramatics Groups ranging from small, obscure clubs

CHAPTER I

THE REASON

Much has been written, perhaps far too much, about

the production of plays by both professionals and amateurs. The great volume of these writings offers a discouraging prospect to enthusiastic amateurs who are seeking practical guidance in their efforts to stage a successful play. The greatest problem is one of selection.

Which books are practical? Which books are worthwhile? This is an attempt at an all-inclusive guide for those who seek the answer to such questions.

To make use of this book one does not need talent. He needs only to retain his enthusiasm and to use a medium of common sense. He need not be a representative of a wealthy dramatic association to which considerable

expenditures of expense or elaborateness of production present no obstacles. Perhaps there are such organizations. I have never had the privilege of being associated with one; in fact, I have never even heard of one.

I am writing for the people referred to in Everyman's Drama, in particular for the vast majority who are members of "small obscure clubs":

There are throughout the country countless Dramatic Groups ranging from small, obscure clubs

to nationally known little theatres that consciously and frankly have as their purpose enjoying themselves and entertaining their audiences through the medium of the theatre. . . . They have accepted, through an evolutionary process, as their primary purpose the serving of the community with the kind of dramatic fare it desires and finds otherwise unobtainable, rather than the building of an audience for a kind of fare considered culturally salutary." ¹

For more than twenty years during my association with various organizations dedicated to the purposes stated above, I have sought a book which would serve as a complete guide for the varied efforts of all concerned. I have never been able to find it, and I have therefore determined to write it. Many of my friends with whom I have been associated on theatrical projects have also spent hours in libraries seeking the most expert advice available in order to secure answers to the innumerable problems confronting us while engaged in the preparation of a theatrical production. Frequently our search has not been for the best answer to a particular problem. We have merely been seeking for one solution to our difficulties. The research which I have done in the preparation of this work, therefore, has been for the purpose of seeking one good solution to each of the most common problems which confront the enthusiastic amateur. I do

¹ Jean Carter and Jess Ogden, Everyman's Drama. American Association for Adult Education, New York, 1938. p. 40.

to nationally known little theatres that consciously and frankly have as their purpose enjoying themselves and entertaining their audiences through the medium of the theatre. . . . They have accepted, through an evolutionary process, as their primary purpose the serving of the community with the kind of dramatic fare it desires and finds otherwise unobtainable, rather than the building of an audience for a kind of fare considered culturally salubrious."

For more than twenty years during my association

with various organizations dedicated to the purposes stated above, I have sought a book which would serve as a complete guide for the varied efforts of all concerned. I have never been able to find it, and I have therefore determined to write it. Many of my friends with whom I have been associated on theatrical projects have also spent hours in libraries seeking the most expert advice available in order to secure answers to the innumerable problems confronting us while engaged in the preparation of a theatrical production. Frequently our search has not been for the best answer to a particular problem. We have merely been seeking for one solution to our difficulties. The research which I have done in the preparation of this work, therefore, has been for the purpose of seeking one good solution to each of the most common problems which confront the enthusiastic amateur. I do

not claim that the ideas which I have to offer are the best available, but I do claim that these ideas are as good as or better than any others which I have been able to find in books or which are based on personal experience. I have tried conscientiously to avoid giving the reader varying solutions to individual difficulties. If he wishes to familiarize himself with a number of different methods of accomplishing any particular job, he must look elsewhere. For such a one, this book may be of some use still, in that I have frequently made reference to easily available sources of additional information.

I. PLAN OF ORGANIZATION

The chapters of this book, following those of a purely introductory nature, have been planned to give a consideration to all procedures which would normally concern an amateur dramatic organization from the time the idea of the organization itself is conceived through the planning and completion of an actual public presentation. As nearly as possible the problems are considered in the order in which they would normally occur; for example, the problem of play selection precedes the question of casting, which in turn precedes the item of directing. However, many subsequent problems arise concurrently, and the determination to consider the electrician prior to the

not claim that the ideas which I have to offer are the best available, but I do claim that these ideas are as good as or better than any others which I have been able to find in books or which are based on personal experience. I have tried conscientiously to avoid giving the reader varying solutions to individual difficulties. If he wishes to familiarize himself with a number of different methods of accomplishing any particular job, he must look elsewhere. For such a one, this book may be of some use still, in that I have frequently made reference to easily available sources of additional information.

I. PLAN OF ORGANIZATION

The chapters of this book, following those of a purely introductory nature, have been planned to give a consideration to all procedures which would normally concern an amateur dramatic organization from the time the idea of the organization itself is conceived through the planning and completion of an actual public presentation. As nearly as possible the problems are considered in the order in which they would normally occur; for example, the problem of play selection precedes the question of casting, which in turn precedes the item of direction. However, many subsequent problems arise concurrently, and the determination to consider the election prior to the

property man or the business manager is purely arbitrary.

A definite attempt has been made on the part of the author to avoid the use of highly technical or specialized terms. On the occasions when it has been necessary for clarity to make use of terms which might be confusing to the layman, definitions have been inserted.

CHAPTER II

IV RETROSPECT

property man or the business manager is purely arbitrary.
A definite attempt has been made on the part of the
author to avoid the use of highly technical or specialized
terms. On the occasions when it has been necessary for
clarity to make use of terms which might be confusing to
the layman, definitions have been inserted.

CHAPTER II

IN RETROSPECT

The drama and the theatre are, strangely enough, two widely divergent considerations. This is primarily a discussion of the theatre. Although there is much practical, down-to-earth detail included throughout, the author has by no means lost sight of the desirability of having drama in the theatre. Many amateur organizations have failed because they have ignored all theatrical considerations; and many organizations have also failed because they ignored all dramatic considerations. If a

CHAPTER II

dramatic organization IN RETROSPECT al service to any community, it can become so only by a melding of both considerations, coupled with a close attention to the public which is being served.

During the years I have followed the theatre as an avocation, and less frequently as a profession, I have watched hundreds of people lift themselves, from time to time, out of their ordinary ways of life as part of a group producing a play. I have seen thousands more who have enriched their lives because they have been given a chance to see plays with living actors, amateurs to be sure, but amateurs more deadly serious in their work than many professionals. I have no intention of giving

CHAPTER II

IN RETROSPECT

CHAPTER II

IN RETROSPECT

The drama and the theatre are, strangely enough, two widely divergent considerations. This is primarily a discussion of the theatre. Although there is much practical, down-to-earth detail included throughout, the author has by no means lost sight of the desirability of having drama in the theatre. Many amateur organizations have failed because they have ignored all theatrical considerations; and many organizations have also failed because they ignored all dramatic considerations. If a dramatic organization is to be of real service to any community, it can become so only by a melding of both considerations, coupled with a close attention to the public which is being served.

During the years I have followed the theatre as an avocation, and less frequently as a profession, I have watched hundreds of people lift themselves, from time to time, out of their ordinary ways of life as part of a group producing a play. I have seen thousands more who have enriched their lives because they have been given a chance to see plays with living actors, amateurs to be sure, but amateurs more deadly serious in their work than many professionals. I have no intention of giving

CHAPTER II

IN RETROSPECT

The drama and the theatre are, strangely enough, two widely divergent considerations. This is primarily a discussion of the theatre. Although there is much practical, down-to-earth detail included throughout, the author has by no means lost sight of the desirability of having drama in the theatre. Many amateur organizations have failed because they have ignored all theatrical considerations; and many organizations have also failed because they ignored all dramatic considerations. If a dramatic organization is to be of real service to any community, it can become so only by a melding of both considerations, coupled with a close attention to the public which is being served.

During the years I have followed the theatre as an avocation, and less frequently as a profession, I have watched hundreds of people lift themselves, from time to time, out of their ordinary ways of life as part of a group producing a play. I have seen thousands more who have enriched their lives because they have been given a chance to see plays with living actors, amateurs to be sure, but amateurs more deadly serious in their work than many professionals. I have no intention of giving

a chronological account of my own experiences, but I have inserted whatever portion of them seemed to be worthwhile. The successes and the failures, the privations and the innovations, the squabbles and the accord which I have witnessed or participated in, all have their places herein, either as a guide for what to do or as an indication of what to avoid.

For bibliographical data, I have depended largely on the facilities of the Boston Public Library and the Boston University College of Liberal Arts Library. For the personal experiences which have inspired this work, I am indebted to my association at one time or another with the organizations listed below:

DRAMATIC ORGANIZATIONS

WITH WHICH THE AUTHOR HAS BEEN ASSOCIATED

The Amateurs
The Amateur Theatre Guild
The Belmont Dramatic Club
The Brookline High School Dramatic Club
The Brunswick Dramatic Club
The College Players, Inc.
The Exeter Players
The Masque and Gown of Bowdoin College
The Newton Players
The Parish Players
The Theatre in the Woods

During the period of my association with these dramatic groups, I have worked in a variety of capacities including directing, stage designing, producing, lighting,

a chronological account of my own experiences, but I have inserted whatever portion of them seemed to be worthwhile. The successes and the failures, the privations and the innovations, the squabbles and the record which I have witnessed or participated in, all have their places herein either as a guide for what to do or as an indication of what to avoid.

For bibliographical data, I have depended largely on the facilities of the Boston Public Library and the Boston University College of Liberal Arts Library. For the personal experiences which have inspired this work, I am indebted to my association at one time or another with the organizations listed below:

DRAMATIC ORGANIZATIONS WITH WHICH THE AUTHOR HAS BEEN ASSOCIATED

- The Amateur
- The Amateur Theatre Guild
- The Belmont Dramatic Club
- The Brookline High School Dramatic Club
- The Brunswick Dramatic Club
- The College Players, Inc.
- The Greater Players
- The Masque and Gown of Bowdoin College
- The Newton Players
- The Parish Players
- The Theatre in the Woods

During the period of my association with these dramatic groups, I have worked in a variety of capacities including directing, stage designing, production, lighting,

business management, acting,--in short, in every conceivable job, on a great number of plays of widely divergent theatrical worth. A partial list of these plays follows:

PLAYS WITH WHICH THE AUTHOR HAS BEEN
CONCERNED IN THE PRODUCTION

Full-Length Plays

Abie's Irish Rose
Androcles and the Lion
B. J. One
Bab
Berkeley Square
Capt. Applejack
Comedy of Errors
Escape
Ghosts
Holiday
Julius Caesar
King Lear
Merchant of Venice
The Mikado
A Murder Has Been Arranged
Murray Hill
Night Must Fall
The Night of January 16th
Officer 666
The Past of Ann Shrieves
The Perfect Alibi
The Play's the Thing
Puebla de Las Mujeres
Rigoletto
Rip Van Winkle
The Romantic Young Lady
Romeo and Juliet
Samson's Riddle
The Second Man
Seventeen
The Showoff
Springtime for Henry
Tommy
Tweedles
Wendy
Wings Over Europe
Your Uncle Dudley

business management, setting,--in short in every conceivable
job, on a great number of plays of widely different theatric-
cal worth. A partial list of these plays follows:

PLAYS WITH WHICH THE AUTHOR HAS BEEN
CONCERNED IN THE PRODUCTION

- Polli-Lessah Plays
- Apple's Irish Rose
- Androcles and the Lion
- E. J. One
- Red
- Exquisite Square
- Capt. Applejack
- Comedy of Errors
- Escape
- Chorus
- Holiday
- Julius Caesar
- King Lear
- Merchant of Venice
- The Mikado
- A Porter Has Been Attended
- Murray Hill
- Night Must Fall
- The Night of January 15th
- Officer 666
- The Last of Ann Shriever
- The Perfect Alibi
- The Play's the Thing
- People as Usual
- Nicola's
- Rip Van Winkle
- The Romantic Temper Lady
- Romeo and Juliet
- Sassan's Riddle
- The Second Fan
- Seventeen
- The Snowfall
- Sprinkle for Henry
- Tenny
- Twaddle
- Waddy
- Winks Over Europe
- Your Uncle Dudley

One-Act Plays

The Bathroom Door
Cabbages
A Christmas Carol
The Finger of God
The Flash
Forty Miles an Hour
The Gallows Gate
Gloria Mundi
Grandma Pulls the Strings
Grandmother's Gift
His Best Seller
Hounds of Hate
The House with the Twisty Windows
Ile
If the Shoe Pinches
Land Ho!
The Maker of Dreams
The Man Upstairs
A Night at an Inn
On Vengeance Height
The Prince Recants
Sauce for the Goslings
Six Who Pass While the Lentils Boil
Submerged
The Valiant
The Violin Maker of Cremona
A Wedding
Where the Cross is Made
Will-o-the-Wisp

One-Act Plays

The Bathroom Door
Carpenter
A Christmas Carol
The Finner of God
The Flash
Forty Miles an Hour
The Gallow Gate
Gloria Linda
Grandma Pulls the Strings
Grandmother's Gift
His Best Seller
Hounds of Fate
The House with the Twisted Windows
Lie
It the Shoe Pinches
Land Ho!
The Maker of Dreams
The Man Upstairs
A Night at an Inn
On Vengeance Heled
The Prince Begonia
Savior for the Goblins
Six Who Pass While the Gentle Bell
Submerged
The Valiant
The Violin Maker of Cremona
A Wedding
Where the Cross is Made
Will-o-the-Wisp

CHAPTER III

THE IDEA

The idea that the community in which they live is starved for drama occurs to many people. The opportunity for anyone who has such an idea to share his thought with a friend is the next step, and the spreading of the idea among other mutual friends is the third move. It is thus that most dramatic clubs are born. The next step is the one where too many people go astray: Enthusiasm is fine, but it must be tempered by sense. Those who would immediately inundate the community with culture, those who view the theatre as the ideal for bringing social problems to the attention of everyone, those who are enthralled by pageantry and by the spectacular, those who have always wanted to play Hamlet or Juliet, those who have always wanted to be sad men in a minstrel show, and in general all who are suffering from a suppressed desire to inflict their hidden talents on an unsuspecting public without expense to themselves--all of these must be firmly and definitely put in their places. This is a delicate job for the ones with the idea, for feelings must not be hurt, and any talent, however meagre, cannot be ignored.

Any organization, when it is beginning, must take care not to over-reach itself. It must not try to accom-

CHAPTER III

THE IDEA

CHAPTER III

THE IDEA

The idea that the community in which they live is starved for drama occurs to many people. The opportunity for anyone who has such an idea to share his thought with a friend is the next step, and the spreading of the idea among other mutual friends is the third move. It is thus that most dramatic clubs are born. The next step is the one where too many people go astray: Enthusiasm is fine, but it must be tempered by sense. Those who would immediately inundate the community with culture, those who view the theatre as the ideal vehicle for bringing social problems to the attention of everyone, those who are enthralled by pageantry and by the spectacular, those who have always wanted to play Hamlet or Juliet, those who have always wanted to be end men in a minstrel show, and in general all who are suffering from a suppressed desire to inflict their hidden talents on an unsuspecting public without expense to themselves--all of these must be firmly and definitely put in their places. This is a delicate job for the ones with the idea, for feelings must not be hurt, and any talent, however meagre, cannot be ignored.

Any organization, when it is beginning, must take care not to over-reach itself. It must not try to accom-

CHAPTER III

THE IDEA

The idea that the community in which they live is starved for drama occurs to many people. The opportunity for anyone who has such an idea to share his thought with a friend is the next step, and the spreading of the idea among other mutual friends is the third move. It is thus that most dramatic clubs are born. The next step is the one where too many people go astray: Enthusiasm is fine, but it must be tempered by sense. Those who would immediately inundate the community with culture, those who view the theatre as the ideal vehicle for bringing social problems to the attention of everyone, those who are enthralled by pageantry and by the spectacular, those who have always

wanted to play Hamlet or Juliet, those who have always wanted to be end men in a minstrel show, and in general all who are suffering from a suppressed desire to inflict their hidden talents on an unappreciating public without expense to themselves--all of these must be firmly and definitely put in their places. This is a delicate job for the ones with the idea, for feelings must not be hurt, and any talent, however meagre, cannot be ignored.

Any organization, when it is beginning, must take care not to over-reach itself. It must not try to accom-

plish things beyond the extent of the talent and abilities at its command. Prior to employing such talents and abilities in an actual production, the safest and cheapest method of procedure is to give play readings. I would suggest the following method as one which can be used successfully in almost any group: First a director should be selected who has some apparent talent for direction. Next a play which is likely to appeal to the audience for whom the reading is to be given should be chosen. This choice of play will of necessity depend upon the availability of copies either in the local public library, in the possession of local educational institutions, or owned by other organizations or individuals who are willing to lend them. The play should be cast by the director, preferably with the assistance of one or two persons who are familiar with the willingness and abilities of the members of the group.

One rehearsal, prior to the presentation of the reading, should be sufficient. The director, of course, must take the trouble to know the play thoroughly so that he can give a minimum of essential instruction in expression and absolutely necessary stage business to each of the readers. Stage properties should be limited to the bare minimum or omitted. When the reading is actually presented, the director should, prior to the beginning of each act, read a description of the stage setting and add

which claims beyond the extent of the talent and abilities of the candidate. Prior to employing such talents and abilities there is an actual production, the talent and abilities of the candidate is to give rise to it. I would suggest the following method as one which can be used successfully in almost any case: First a director should be selected who has some general talent for direction. Next a play which is likely to appeal to the audience for whom the play is to be given should be chosen. This choice of play will of necessity depend upon the availability of copies either in the local public library, in the possession of local educational institutions, or owned by other organizations or individuals who are willing to lend them. The play should be read by the director, preferably with the assistance of one or two persons who are familiar with the literature and abilities of the members of the group. (See Appendix) Prior to the presentation of the reading, should be suggested. The director, of course, must take the trouble to know the play thoroughly so that he can give a minimum of essential instruction in scenes and absolutely necessary stage business to each of the readers. These properties should be limited to the bare minimum or omitted. When the reading is actually completed, the director should, prior to the beginning of each act, read a description of the scene setting and the

any of his own comments which will assist the audience to substitute their own imaginations for realism. Unless one has actually witnessed a seriously presented play reading of this sort, it is almost impossible to appreciate how very effective such a presentation can be. The only way to prove this point is by actual experimentation.

The primary purpose of play readings will usually be for the enjoyment of the group. However, there are a number of secondary reasons for such an activity which should not be ignored. First among these is the opportunity to discover unsuspected acting talent among members of the group. Many who have never acted on the stage in their lives will demonstrate surprising ability in such an informal atmosphere. In addition, the reactions of the audience should be carefully observed and considered. These reactions will be a definite indication of the type of drama that can be best presented formally. As a result, it may be worthwhile to seek a play of real dramatic and literary value, and those who indicate a sense of value and taste by their comments should be enrolled as prospective members of a play reading and selection committee.

After two or three successful readings is time enough to begin work on a permanent form of organization. To begin with, the officers should be as few in number as possible. A president and a secretary-treasurer will

any of his own comments which will assist the audience to substitute their own imaginations for realism. Unless one has actually witnessed a seriously presented play reading of this sort, it is almost impossible to appreciate how very effective such a presentation can be. The only way to prove this point is by actual experimentation.

The primary purpose of play readings will usually be for the enjoyment of the group. However, there are a number of secondary reasons for such an activity which should not be ignored. First among these is the opportunity to discover unsuspected acting talent among members of the group. Many who have never acted on the stage in their lives will demonstrate surprising ability in such an informal atmosphere. In addition, the reactions of the audience should be carefully observed and considered. These reactions will be a definite indication of the type of drama that can be best presented formally. As a result, it may be worthwhile to seek a play of real dramatic and literary value, and those who indicate a sense of value and taste by their comments should be enrolled as prospective members of a play reading and selection committee.

After two or three successful readings is time enough to begin work on a permanent form of organization. To begin with, the officers should be as few in number as possible. A president and a secretary-treasurer will

FIGURE 1

Example of a Typical Dramatic Club Constitution

THE CONSTITUTION

OF

The Exeter Players



ADOPTED MAY 23, 1936

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I. *Name.* The name of this organization shall be THE EXETER PLAYERS.

ARTICLE II. *Purpose.* The purpose of the organization shall be twofold: (1) the public performance of plays and other dramatic productions; (2) the reading and private performances of plays for the entertainment of members.

ARTICLE III. *Membership.* Membership shall be of two classes, Active and Associate. Active members shall be those who participate or desire to participate in any of the work relating to the public performance of plays or of other dramatic productions. Associate members shall be all other members.

Each member shall be entitled to one ticket free of charge to any one performance of every public production by the organization. All members shall be privileged to attend all general meetings, business or social, and to vote at all general business meetings.

ARTICLE IV. *Dues.* Dues shall be \$2.50 per annum for every member, payable on or before October 15th. Any person joining the organization on or after March 1st of any one year shall pay for that year dues of \$1.50.

ARTICLE V. *Profits.* All profits from public performances shall be given to charity. In the event of dissolution, all moneys belonging to the organization shall likewise be given to charity.

ARTICLE VI. *Officers and Executive Committee.* The business of the organization shall be conducted by its Officers and an Executive Committee. The officers shall be a President, a Corresponding Secretary, a Recording Secretary, a Treasurer, and a Business Manager. The Executive Committee shall consist of these officers together with six other members.

FIGURE 1

Example of a Typical Dramatic Club Constitution

All officers shall be elected by a majority vote at the Annual General Business Meeting, and shall hold office for one year. Three members of the Executive Committee shall be elected by a plurality vote at the Annual General Business Meeting, and shall hold office for two years, except that at the Annual General Business Meeting held in 1939, six Committee Members shall be elected, of whom the three receiving the lowest number of votes shall hold office for only one year. All officers and all members of the Executive Committee shall be eligible for re-election. In the event of any vacancy occurring among the officers or Executive Committee, the Executive Committee shall appoint a member of the organization to fill the vacancy. If the vacancy occurs with respect to a Committee member whose term of office extends beyond the next Annual General Business Meeting, the appointment shall expire at that meeting, and the vacancy for the remainder of the term shall be filled by a plurality vote of the meeting.

Six members of the Executive Committee shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

ARTICLE VII. *General Business Meeting.* There shall be an Annual General Business Meeting at some time in May or June, at which meeting the Recording Secretary shall present a report, the Treasurer shall present the accounts duly audited, and elections shall be held in accordance with Article VI.

In addition, the Executive Committee shall call a General Business Meeting whenever requested in writing to do so by not fewer than ten members.

At least ten days' notice, with a statement of business to be transacted, shall be given of all General Business Meetings.

Twenty-five members of the organization shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any General Business Meeting.

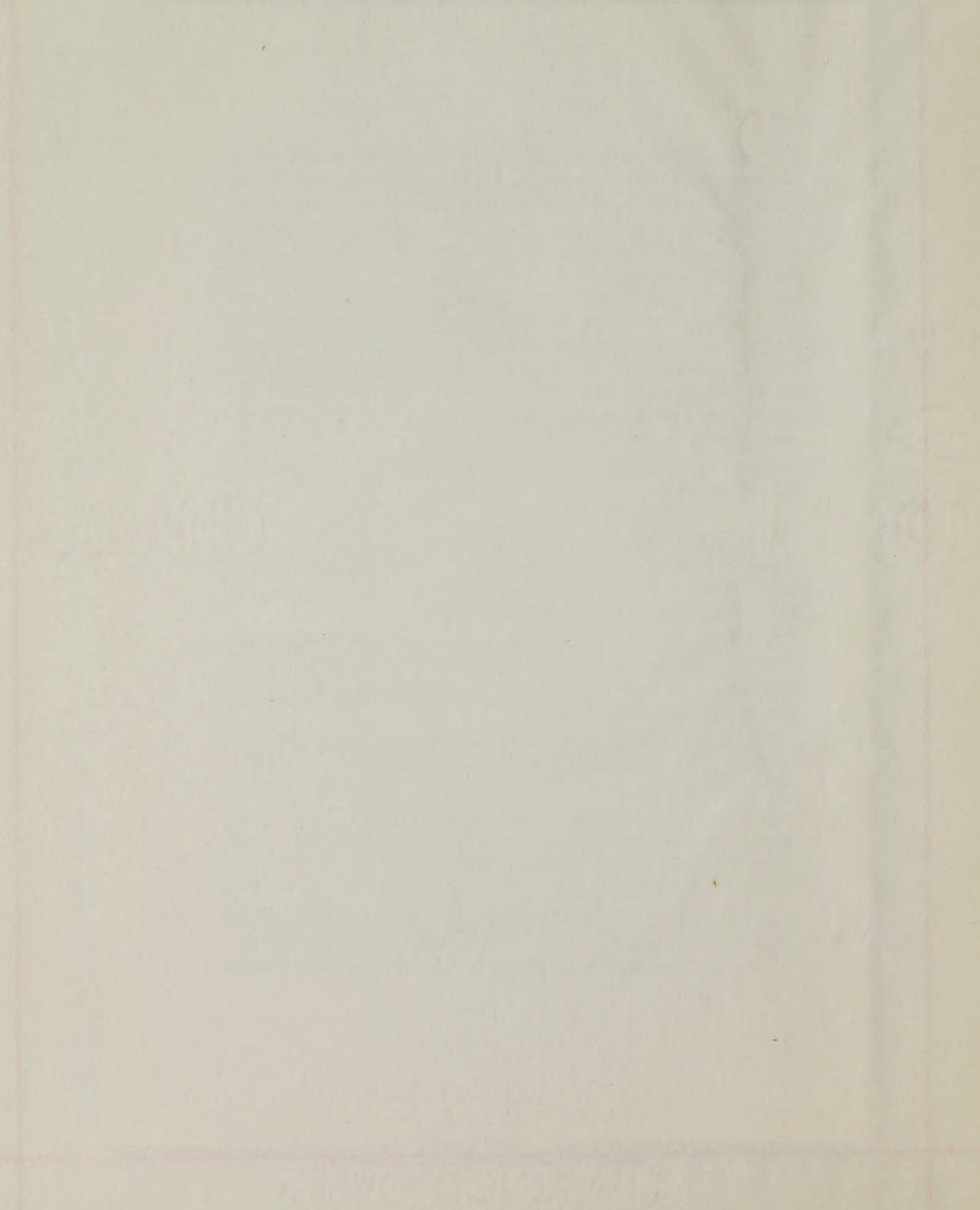
ARTICLE VIII. *Fiscal Year.* The fiscal year shall run from one Annual General Business Meeting to the next. Wherever used in these Articles of Constitution, "year" shall be construed to mean "fiscal year."

ARTICLE IX. *Amendment of Constitution.* This Constitution may be amended at any General Business Meeting by a vote of two thirds of the members present.

The wording of the proposed amendment shall be given in the notice of the meeting.

FIGURE 1

Example of a Typical Transverse Club Construction



probably be sufficient. They should have an executive committee of two or three members to assist them. The only permanent committees that need be appointed at first are one to care for the social arrangements and refreshments at club meetings, and the one previously mentioned, for the purpose of play reading and selection.

To put a club such as this on a firm basis, it is advisable to charge a small yearly membership fee, and it must be a definite responsibility of the club officers to see to it that the social functions and other necessary expenses of the organization never leave the treasury with a deficit. Above all, when an actual public production is planned, great care should be taken to make certain that such a production stands on its own feet and does not depend upon the club treasury to make up any loss.

All available local libraries, public and private, will be the club's greatest asset, but this does not preclude the establishment of the club's own library at the earliest possible moment. The primary acquisitions for such a library will be the free or moderately priced catalogs of the best-known play publishers, such as Samuel French, Walter Baker, and Longmans Green and Company, whose complete addresses can be found in the Bibliography. There have been many books published which are concerned with accounts of non-professional theatres actually exist-

probably be sufficient. They should have an executive committee of two or three members to assist them. The only permanent committees that need be appointed at first are one to care for the social arrangements and refreshments at club meetings, and the one previously mentioned for the purpose of play reading and selection.

To put a club such as this on a firm basis, it is advisable to charge a small yearly membership fee, and it must be a definite responsibility of the club officers to see to it that the social functions and other necessary expenses of the organization never leave the treasury with a deficit. Above all, when an actual public production is planned, great care should be taken to make certain that such a production stands on its own feet and does not depend upon the club treasury to make up any loss.

All available local libraries, public and private, will be the club's greatest asset, but this does not preclude the establishment of the club's own library at the earliest possible moment. The primary acquisitions for such a library will be the free or moderately priced editions of the best-known play publishers, such as Samuel French, Walter Baker, and Doubleday Green and Company, whose complete addresses can be found in the bibliography. There have been many books published which are concerned with accounts of non-professional theatres actually exist-

ing in the United States today. For those seriously interested in finding out what is being done elsewhere, for the purpose of using other organizations as a model, I would particularly recommend Oliver M. Sayler's Our American Theatre. This work is definitely divided into sections on the little theatre, the institutional theatre, the civic theatre, the college theatre, and so forth, so that anyone seeking a model need concern himself only with the section referring to his own particular type of group. Kenneth MacGowan's Footlights Across America is called by the author an attempt to estimate the extent, nature, and significance of the non-commercial theatre in America. For anyone interested, therefore, in these broader aspects, MacGowan's work is a complete and thorough treatment of the subject. His chapter on "Professionalizing the Amateur Theatre" is particularly interesting and valuable. A third excellent book on the general subject of accomplishment in the amateur theatre throughout the United States is Clarence Stratton's Theatron, which gives an illustrated record of theatres, large and small, professional and amateur, and the story of what has been done with certain plays in them.

Complete titles, authors' names, and publishers' addresses for all publications mentioned in this and subsequent chapters may be found in the Bibliography.

ing in the United States today. For these reasons I have
 stated in finding out what is being done elsewhere, for the
 purpose of using other circumstances as a model. I would
 particularly recommend Oliver M. Weaver's Our American
 Theatre. This work is definitely divided into sections on
 the little theatre, the institutional theatre, the civic
 theatre, the college theatre, and so forth, so that anyone
 seeking a model need concern himself only with the section
 referring to his own particular type of work. Kenneth
 Woodman's Footlights across America is called by the
 author an attempt to estimate the extent, nature, and sig-
 nificance of the non-commercial theatre in America. For
 anyone interested, whether in these broader aspects,
 Woodman's work is a valuable and thorough treatment of
 the subject. The chapter on "Professionalizing the Theatre"
 is particularly interesting and valuable. A third
 excellent book on the general subject of entertainment in
 the theatre theatre throughout the United States is Glen
 and Gladys's Theatre, which gives an illustrated record
 of theatre, large and small, professional and amateur, and
 the story of what has been done with certain plays in this
 country. Titles, authors' names, and publishers' addresses for all publications mentioned in this and the
 present chapter may be found in the bibliography.

CHAPTER IV

PLAY SELECTION

When an organization has become sufficiently well established to warrant the consideration of plans for a public production, many new problems present themselves. First among these problems, is the question of the selection of the play. All of the suggestions given in Chapter III regarding the selection of a play for an informal reading are fully as pertinent when a public performance is being considered. A much more serious consideration must be given to the public which is to comprise the audience than is necessary when considering plays to be presented only before a select group. Any public performance, in order to be successful, must pay its own way financially.

It doubles the difficulty of securing future audiences from any community when they have once been disappointed because insufficient care has been taken to select a piece that will appeal to their tastes. I know of one occasion when a college dramatic club had become so interested in Ibsen, due no doubt to the excellent and enthusiastic guidance of a professor of the drama, that they determined to present Ghosts at a college house-party. Needless to say, despite the excellence of the drama itself, and the adequacy of the production, the depressing effect of such a play on the

CHAPTER IV

PLAY SELECTION

CHAPTER IV

PLAY SELECTION

When an organization has become sufficiently well established to warrant the consideration of plans for a public production, many new problems present themselves. First among these problems, is the question of the selection of the play. All of the suggestions given in Chapter III regarding the selection of a play for an informal reading are fully as pertinent when a public performance is being considered. A much more serious consideration must be given to the public which is to comprise the audience than is necessary when considering plays to be presented only before a select group. Any public performance, in order to be successful, must pay its own way financially.

It doubles the difficulty of securing future audiences from any community when they have once been disappointed because insufficient care has been taken to select a piece that will appeal to their tastes. I know of one occasion when a college dramatic club had become so interested in Ibsen, due no doubt to the excellent and enthusiastic guidance of a professor of the drama, that they determined to present Ghosts at a college house-party. Needless to say, despite the excellence of the drama itself, and the adequacy of the production, the depressing effect of such a play on the

CHAPTER IV

PLAY SELECTION

When an organization has become sufficiently well established to warrant the consideration of plans for a public production, many new problems present themselves. First among these problems, is the question of the selection of the play. All of the suggestions given in Chapter III regarding the selection of a play for an informal reading are fully as pertinent when a public performance is being considered. A much more serious consideration must be given to the public which is to comprise the audience than is necessary when considering plays to be presented only before a select group. Any public performance, in order to be successful, must pay its own way financially.

It doubles the difficulty of securing future audiences from any community when they have once been disappointed because insufficient care has been taken to select a piece that will appeal to their tastes. I know of one occasion when a college dramatic club had become so interested in *Isaac*, the professor of the drama, that they determined to present *Isaac* at a college house-party. Needless to say, despite the excellence of the drama itself, and the adequacy of the production, the depressing effect of such a play on the

audience for whom it was given was most unfortunate. Not only was the dramatic club subjected to immediate severe criticism for the selection, but the attendance at subsequent house-party plays showed a definite reduction for almost two years thereafter.

Another important consideration is the question of the sensibilities of the prospective audience. A play which has been successful on Broadway, or even in Boston, may be too risqué for many New England towns or for many a parish hall. In some plays, such things as excessive profanity may be toned down sufficiently to make such plays acceptable to the audience concerned, but to attempt such censorship of a play like The Front Page would be futile. If the audience would not accept it virtually as it was written, it would be far better to select another play, rather than spoil the presentation by trying to make hard-boiled newspaper reporters talk like Sunday School teachers. Many other plays offer similar problems because of essential incidents rather than dialogue. The entire motivation of The Play's the Thing is based upon the supposed similarity between a ripe peach and a woman's breast. For any audience who would refuse to recognize such a comparison, the futility of attempting to present the play is obvious.

The stage to be used must also be carefully considered. Some plays can be produced successfully with almost no

audience for whom it was given was most unfortunate. Not only was the dramatic club subjected to immediate severe criticism for the selection, but the attendance at subsequent house-party plays showed a definite reaction for almost two years thereafter.

Another important consideration is the question of the sensibilities of the prospective audience. A play which has been successful on Broadway, or even in Boston, may be too risqué for many New England towns or for many a parish hall. In some plays, such things as excessive profanity may be toned down sufficiently to make such plays acceptable to the audience concerned, but to attempt such censorship of a play like The Front Page would be futile. If the audience would not accept it virtually as it was written, it would be far better to select another play, rather than spoil the presentation by trying to make hard-boiled newspaper reporters talk like Sunday School teachers. Many other plays offer similar problems because of essential incidents rather than dialogue. The entire motivation of The Day's the Thing is based upon the supposed similarity between a ripe peach and a woman's breast. For any audience who would refuse to recognize such a comparison the futility of attempting to present the play is obvious.

The stage to be used must also be carefully considered. Some plays can be produced successfully with almost no

regard to the stage facilities available. If the cast is small, if only one setting is to be used, and if there are no particular difficulties with stage properties or lighting, almost any sort of platform may suffice.

When I was working in summer stock a few years ago, we took Your Uncle Dudley on a tour which covered a number of small Maine summer communities. In this play it is necessary several times for characters to exit from one side of the stage and re-enter during the same act from the other. One of the halls which arrangements had been made for us to use for this play had a stage which was so shallow that the scenery had to be placed flush with the rear wall in order to allow sufficient space for the necessary action. It was discovered at the last moment that no facilities were available for the necessary cross-overs unless the actors entered the auditorium itself and crossed in full view of the audience. Consequently, two ladders were hurriedly acquired and placed at backstage windows on each side of the stage so that the actors and actresses could cross by descending to the ground and walking around the rear of the building to climb in the window on the opposite side. A number of those present in the audience were familiar with the smallness of the stage and were completely mystified when the actors re-appeared on the side opposite to that from which they had made their exits.

regard to the stage facilities available. If the cast is small, if only one setting is to be used, and if there are no particular difficulties with stage properties or lighting, almost any sort of platform may suffice.

When I was working in summer stock a few years ago, we took Yonk Uagie Dabley on a tour which covered a number of small Maine summer communities. In this play it is necessary several times for characters to exit from one side of the stage and re-enter during the same act from the other. One of the halls which arrangements had been made for us to use for this play had a stage which was so shallow that the scenery had to be placed flush with the rear wall in order to allow sufficient space for the necessary action. It was discovered at the last moment that no facilities were available for the necessary cross-overs unless the actors entered the auditorium itself and crossed in full view of the audience. Consequently two ladders were hurriedly acquired and placed at backstage windows on each side of the stage so that the actors and actresses could cross by ascending to the ground and walking around the rear of the building to climb in the window on the opposite side. A number of those present in the audience were familiar with the smallness of the stage and were completely mystified when the actors re-appeared on the side opposite to that from which they had made their exits.

FIGURE 2

A Simple Setting With Improvised Properties



(Illustrating the ease with which realism can be suggested
even on the smallest of stages)

FIGURE 2

A Simple Setting with Improved Properties

(Illustrating the ease with which realism can be suggested
even on the smallest of stages)

Another apparently minor, but particularly significant point is the availability of sanitary facilities backstage. To many amateur actresses in particular, the presence or absence of convenient arrangements may be responsible for the failure or success of their performances.

Above all else, any amateur organization should make a careful estimate of the acting talent available to it. Many of the best plays contain extremely difficult parts, and an attempt should be made to make certain that there are people available who are capable as well as willing. Nothing can ruin a performance more readily than poor acting in the principal parts. On the other hand, if it is known that finished actors are not available, there is no reason to abandon all thoughts of presenting a play because of this lack. The alternative is obvious: Select a play which is fitted to the capabilities of those likely to be acting in it. It is unlikely that any of the dramatic masterpieces of the ages will offer themselves as vehicles for a group whose talent is uncertain. There are, however, many good plays which can be well done by almost any organization.

It is far easier to suggest what to avoid than it is to suggest specific suitable plays. First of all, plays containing highly dramatic scenes, thereby necessitating violent emotional activity on the part of the characters, can easily become ludicrous when performed by amateurs.

Another apparently minor, but particularly significant point is the availability of sanitary facilities backstage. To many amateur actresses in particular, the presence or absence of convenient arrangements may be responsible for the failure or success of their performances. Above all else, any amateur organization should make a careful estimate of the talent available to it. Many of the best plays contain extremely difficult parts, and an attempt should be made to make certain that there are people available who are capable as well as willing. Nothing can ruin a performance more readily than poor acting in the principal parts. On the other hand, if it is known that finished actors are not available, there is no reason to abandon all thoughts of presenting a play because of this lack. The alternative is obvious: Select a play which is fitted to the capabilities of those likely to be acting in it. It is unlikely that any of the dramatic masterpieces of the ages will offer themselves as vehicles for a group whose talent is uncertain. There are, however, many good plays which can be well done by almost any organization. It is far easier to suggest what to avoid than it is to suggest specific suitable plays. First of all, plays containing highly dramatic scenes, thereby necessitating violent emotional activity on the part of the characters, can easily become indigestible when performed by amateurs.

Sustained comic action, called for in many farces, is a pitfall into which many non-professionals have fallen. No play can carry itself on its own merits, and untalented or poorly directed actors, who feel that the success of a dramatic presentation depends solely on the humor of the lines and situations, may easily become very tiresome to the audience. The Show Off is one farce which definitely comes in this category. The character in the title role, whose blundering never seems to hinder him from coming out ahead of the game, can become a very boring and even obnoxious character unless the actor playing this part has the ability to give it just the right touch.

A special warning is given against attempting plays which are socially significant. In the event that the social problem considered is pertinent to the particular community, it will undoubtedly be so controversial that there is more to be lost than gained by trying to present it on the stage. On the other hand, if the problem does not concern the community, the resultant lack of interest will probably cause the audience to suffer from acute boredom.

Plays which offer a psychological problem are also very difficult for amateurs. Such dramas usually demand superior acting in order that necessary character development may be convincing. It is usually hard enough to direct

... Sustained comic action, called for in many farces, is a pitfall into which many non-professionals have fallen. No play can carry itself on its own merits, and unlabeled or poorly directed actors, who feel that the success of a dramatic presentation depends solely on the humor of the lines and situations, may easily become very tiresome to the audience. The Show Off is one farce which definitely comes in this category. The character in the title role, whose blundering never seems to hinder him from coming out ahead of the game, can become a very boring and even obnoxious character unless the actor playing this part has the ability to give it just the right touch.

A special warning is given against attempting plays which are socially significant. In the event that the social problem considered is pertinent to the particular community, it will undoubtedly be so controversial that there is more to be lost than gained by trying to present it on the stage. On the other hand, if the problem does not concern the community, the resultant lack of interest will probably cause the audience to suffer from acute boredom.

Plays which offer a psychological problem are also very difficult for amateurs. Such dramas usually demand superior acting in order that necessary character development may be convincing. It is usually hard enough to direct

untrained amateurs in the type of characterization which remains static throughout the play without attempting a constant change and development as the play progresses.

I do not mean to sound discouraging with all the warnings voiced in the preceding paragraphs. As any amateur organization progresses, it should not be difficult for it to keep a finger on its own pulse, and realize when it is over-extending itself. For any group in its infancy, I strongly suggest that its efforts be confined to modern drawing room dramas or not too complicated mystery plays. In the first-named classification, I can particularly recommend Murray Hill and The Torch Bearers; and in the second group, The Night of January 16th and The Perfect Alibi. All four of these are plays which are not too difficult to perform or to stage, and should please and amuse most ordinary community audiences.

The question of royalties and elaborateness of production should be the immediate concern of the officers of the organization responsible for its financial stability. Every dramatic club has at least one member who has just seen Life With Father or some other current Broadway hit, and thinks it would be an ideal vehicle for an amateur presentation. Popular plays which are being currently presented by professional companies, or which have recently finished successful runs, are seldom available to amateurs

untrained amateurs in the type of characterization which remains static throughout the play without attempting a constant change and development as the play progresses. I do not mean to sound discouraging with all the warnings voiced in the preceding paragraphs. As any amateur organization progresses, it should not be difficult for it to keep a finger on its own pulse, and realize when it is over-extending itself. For any group in its infancy, I strongly suggest that its efforts be confined to modern drawing room dramas or not too complicated mystery plays. In the first named classification, I can particularly recommend Murphy Hill and The Torch Bearer; and in the second group, The Night of January 15th and The Perfect Alibi. All four of these are plays which are not too difficult to perform or to stage, and should please and amuse most ordinary community audiences.

The question of royalties and eligibility of production should be the immediate concern of the officers of the organization responsible for its financial stability. Every dramatic club has at least one member who has just seen Life With Father or some other current Broadway hit, and thinks it would be an ideal vehicle for an amateur presentation. Popular plays which are being currently presented by professional companies, or which have recently finished successful runs, are seldom available to amateurs.

at a low enough royalty to make their consideration feasible. Any group catering to the usual small audience has doomed its production to failure if it obligates itself to pay a royalty of one hundred dollars or more for each performance.

The question of scenery and costuming must also be looked at from the point of view of cost. Many times some enthusiast, who wants to put on some royalty-free play such as Shakespeare or The School for Scandal, is dissuaded from his point of view only when confronted by figures on the cost of production.

The matter of the auditorium to be used is also extremely important. Most amateurs who are participating in a theatrical performance can be available for a run of only two or three evenings. Likewise, most small communities cannot be depended upon to provide more than two or three audiences for any one play. The product of the capacity of the hall times the number of performances times the amount to be charged for individual admissions will give an immediate maximum of gross receipts. This figure divided by two should give a maximum of gross expenditures. Careful consideration of these points will at once eliminate many controversial possibilities. Consideration should also be given to the comfort of the audience in the auditorium selected. Are all parts of the stage visible from all seats in the hall, or must certain ones be eliminated? Are the

at a low enough royalty to make their consideration feasible.

Any group entering to the usual small audience has booked its production to failure if it obligates itself to pay a royalty of one hundred dollars or more for each performance. The question of agency and contracting must also be

looked at from the point of view of cost. Many times some enthusiast, who wants to put on some royalty-free play such as Shakespeare or The School for Scandal, is dissuaded from his point of view only when confronted by figures on the

cost of production.

The matter of the auditorium to be used is also extremely important. Most amateurs who are participating in a theatrical performance can be available for a run of only two or three evenings. Likewise most small communities

cannot be depended upon to provide more than two or three audiences for any one play. The product of the capacity of the hall times the number of performances times the amount to be charged for individual admissions will give an immediate maximum of gross receipts. This figure divided by two should give a maximum of gross expenditures. Careful con-

sideration of these points will at once eliminate many controversial possibilities. Consideration should also be given to the comfort of the audience in the auditorium seated. Are all parts of the stage visible from all seats in the hall, or must certain ones be eliminated? Are the

seats comfortable? If the floor of the hall is level, can those who sit back a few rows see the stage at all? Are the acoustics adequate to permit amateur actors to be heard by everyone in the audience? Failure to consider any of these points may result in the failure of the play itself.

For those who are discouraged by the inadequacy of local auditoriums and halls, I would recommend that they try to secure a copy of Bulletin No. 4, 1939, of the Office of Education, United States Department of the Interior, entitled The School Auditorium as a Theatre. This publication gives extensive statistics on capacities and dimensions of school auditoriums and stages throughout the United States. It shows everything from flagrant errors in planning and construction, which are unfortunately exceeding common, to the ideal structure. In reading of the prize example of the latter, as illustrated by the Shorewood, Wisconsin, High School auditorium, most amateur dramatic enthusiasts will drool with envy, but the multitude of examples of inferior auditoriums and stages may give some consolation by comparison with what is available to the one concerned.

The question of what equipment is available for the production of the play selected must not be ignored. If the scenery, lighting equipment, stage properties, and so on must be purchased or constructed, any club will do well to give some serious thought to the adaptability of such

seats comfortable? If the floor of the hall is level, can those who sit back a few rows see the stage at all? Are the

acoustics adequate to permit amateur actors to be heard by everyone in the audience? Failure to consider any of these points may result in the failure of the play itself.

For those who are discouraged by the inadequacy of

local auditoriums and halls, I would recommend that they try to secure a copy of Bulletin No. 4, 1932, of the Office

of Education, United States Department of the Interior, entitled The School Auditorium as a Theatre. This publication gives extensive statistics on capacities and dimensions

of school auditoriums and stages throughout the United

States. It shows everything from blatant errors in planning and construction, which are unfortunately exceedingly common, to the ideal structure. In reading of the prize example

of the latter, as illustrated by the Sherwood, Wisconsin, High School auditorium, most amateur dramatic enthusiasts

will drool with envy, but the multitude of examples of inferior auditoriums and stages may give some consolation by

comparison with what is available to the one concerned.

The question of what equipment is available for the

production of the play selected must not be ignored. If

the scenery, lighting equipment, stage properties, and so on must be purchased or constructed, any club will do well

to give some serious thought to the adaptability of such

things for future productions. Primarily, it is well to determine what can be borrowed or what improvisations can be made, before thinking of purchase or construction. The question of borrowing definitely depends upon what is available locally. The question of purchase is virtually the same everywhere. Theatrical supply houses exist in most large cities and their prices are universally high. The question of improvisation depends upon the common sense and ingenuity of the club members, as does the matter of construction. These last two items will be gone into in some detail in subsequent chapters.

School groups attempting dramatic presentations offer unusual and individual problems. In the event that the actors are all young, it is almost futile to try to make them convincingly portray adults. For teen-agers, such plays as Seventeen and Tommy give the opportunity for the principal characters, at least, to act their age. The question of all male or all female casts is a bothersome and almost insurmountable problem. If there is any possible way to make talent of the other sex available, it is by far the best solution.

There are many publications which are concerned with plays available for amateur presentation. Mention has been made in a previous chapter of the play catalogs of several of the most prominent play publishers. In addition, there

things for future productions. Primarily it is well to determine what can be borrowed or what improvisations can be made before thinking of purchase or construction. The question of borrowing definitely depends upon what is available locally. The question of purchase is virtually the same everywhere. Theatrical supply houses exist in most large cities and their prices are universally high. The question of improvisation depends upon the common sense and ingenuity of the club members as does the matter of construction. These last two items will be come into in some detail in subsequent chapters.

School groups attempting dramatic presentations offer unusual and individual problems. In the event that the actors are all young, it is almost futile to try to make them convincingly portray adults. For teen-agers, such plays as Seventeen and Tommy give the opportunity for the principal characters, at least, to act their age. The question of all male or all female casts is a bothersome and almost insurmountable problem. If there is any possible way to make talent of the other sex available, it is by far the best solution.

There are many publications which are concerned with plays available for amateur presentation. Mention has been made in a previous chapter of the play catalogs of several of the most prominent play publishers. In addition, there

FIGURE 3

Stage Setting for Your Uncle Dudley



(Illustrating one way of using a stairway on a small stage)

FIGURE 3

State Setting for Your Uncle

(Illustrating one way of using a stateway on a small state)

are many books which might prove particularly helpful to those engaged in an attempt to select a play. Producing in Little Theatres, by Clarence Stratton, contains on pages 227 to 249 a list of one hundred full-length plays and one hundred one-act plays suitable for amateurs. Brief commentaries are given on each of the plays named, and many of those recommended are royalty-free. The Work of the Little Theatre, by C. A. Perry, has on pages 61 to 143 an extensive list of full-length plays and one-act plays, together with the publisher of each and full information on royalty charges. This book also has on pages 210 to 213 the addresses of virtually all known play publishers. The Burns Mantle series of selected plays for each season, beginning with 1919, offers to any play reading committee the opportunity to become more fully acquainted with any play which has once been a hit and which they may be considering. In these books, which are available in most public libraries, much of the dialogue of each play is written out in full, but portions are abstracted and written as narrative so that the reader may get a fairly complete idea of the play as a whole in a comparatively brief time. There are, of course, many other books in addition to the three I have just mentioned, which variously cover this same material. I recommend these three as the ones which I have found most practical and useful.

are many books which might prove particularly helpful to those engaged in an attempt to select a play. Problems in Little Theatres, by Clarence Stratton, contains on pages 227 to 242 a list of one hundred full-length plays and one hundred one-act plays suitable for amateurs. Brief commentaries are given on each of the plays named, and many of those recommended are royalty-free. The Work of the Little Theatre, by C. A. Berry, has on pages 41 to 142 an extensive list of full-length plays and one-act plays, together with the publisher of each and full information on royalty charges. This book also has on pages 210 to 212 the addresses of virtually all known play publishers. The Little Theatre series of selected plays for each season, beginning with 1919, offers to any play reader committee the opportunity to become more fully acquainted with any play which has once been a hit and which they may be considering. In these books, which are available in most public libraries, much of the dialogue of each play is written out in full, but portions are abridged and written as narrative so that the reader may get a fairly complete idea of the play as a whole in a comparatively brief time. There are, of course, many other books in addition to the three I have just mentioned, which verily cover this same material. I recommend these three as the ones which I have found most practical and useful.

Any play reading committee, in addition to considering the points already mentioned, must not ignore the question of production difficulties and the talent available to fulfill the duties in the various departments described in subsequent chapters. If the play selected requires special scenery, is there any talented person in the organization capable of meeting these requirements? If unusual lighting effects are needed, is there talent available for producing them? The Theatre Handbook and Digest of Plays, edited by Bernard Sobel, is a good reference for any committee or department chairman who, having little idea of the job, wants to learn all about it in five minutes' reading time. In addition, this publication contains a collection of alphabetized paragraph-long condensations of many well-known plays, and on pages 867 to 896 there appears a comprehensive bibliography of over four hundred books on all aspects of the theatre. He is the apple to be consulted on all problems which arise. He should be prepared either to give an answer to any question asked of him, or to know where the answer can be found. G. A. Ferry, in The Work of the Little Theatres, provides several bibliographical lists which should be of assistance to any producer either for extending his own information or as a recommendation to any department head. Works on play production are listed on page 197, on settings and lighting

any play reading committee, in addition to consider-
 other the points already mentioned, must not ignore the
 question of production difficulties and the talent avail-
 able to fulfill the duties in the various departments de-
 scribed in subsequent chapters. If the play selected re-
 quires special scenery, is there any talented person in the
 organization capable of meeting these requirements? If
 unusual lighting effects are needed, is there talent avail-
 able for producing them? The Theatre Handbook and Digest
of Plays, edited by Bernard Sobel, is a good reference for
 any committee or department chairman who, having little idea
 of the job, wants to learn all about it in five minutes
 reading time. In addition, this publication contains a
 collection of alphabetized paragraph-long condensations of
 many well-known plays, and on pages 867 to 896 there ap-
 pears a comprehensive bibliography of over four hundred
 books on all aspects of the theatre.

CHAPTER V

THE PRODUCER

Whenever a group contemplates the public presentation of a play, it should immediately select some one person to act as producer or production manager. Although this office is universal in all professional companies, it is frequently ignored in amateur groups. The producer should be well versed in every possible aspect of theatrical production. He should be well endowed with common sense and should, above all else, have an agreeable personality.

The producer should be given no specific responsibilities in the preparation of the production, but should act as coordinator of the responsibilities of all others concerned. He should supervise the rehearsal schedule. He should appoint the committee or department heads and indicate deadlines for the completion of the work of each. He is the oracle to be consulted on all problems which arise. He should be prepared either to give an answer to any question asked of him, or to know where the answer can be found. C. A. Perry, in The Work of the Little Theatres, provides several bibliographical lists which should be of assistance to any producer either for extending his own information or as a recommendation to any department head. Works on play production are listed on page 197, on settings and lighting

CHAPTER V

THE PRODUCER

Whenever a group contemplates the public presentation of a play, it should immediately select some one person to act as producer or production manager. Although this office is universal in all professional companies, it is frequently ignored in amateur groups. The producer should be well versed in every possible aspect of theatrical production. He should be well endowed with common sense and should, above all else, have an agreeable personality. The producer should be given no specific responsibilities in the preparation of the production, but should act as coordinator of the responsibilities of all others concerned. He should supervise the rehearsal schedule. He should appoint the committee or department heads and indicate deadlines for the completion of the work of each. He is the oracle to be consulted on all problems which arise. He should be prepared either to give an answer to any question asked of him, or to know where the answer can be found. C. A. Perry, in The Work of the Little Theatres, provides several bibliographical lists which should be of assistance to any producer either for extending his own information or as a recommendation to any department head. Works on play production are listed on page 127, on settings and lighting

on page 199, on costuming on page 201, on makeup on page 203, and on acting on page 204. *work or responsibility. One*

member A good producer, who is capable of delegating his responsibilities, should have no need for any specially assigned assistants. All of the principal department heads or committee chairmen should be the ones to see that all his suggestions are carried out. The director, the stage manager, the electrician, the property manager, and the business manager should all be directly responsible to the producer. Their specific duties and responsibilities are described in some detail in subsequent chapters. Assistants to these department heads, as well as the minor committee chairmen, should not be the direct concern of the producer. He will find that his job is much simpler if he limits his dealings to those listed above, and lets them pass on his suggestions or directions to the members of their respective groups. He should avoid giving anyone the idea that he is interfering in any particular department. He must also remember that no minor committee member can do adequate work if he is receiving instructions from more than one individual.

Too often, amateur groups allow all the responsibilities which should be the producer's to fall upon the director, but no director, encumbered with the necessity of following up the work of everybody else connected with the play in addition to his actors, can do an adequate job. It

on page 192, on continuing on page 201, on taking on page 202 and on acting on page 204.

A good producer, who is capable of delegating his

responsibilities, should have no need for any specially assigned assistants. All of the principal department heads or committee chairmen should be the ones to see that all his suggestions are carried out. The director, the stage manager, the electrician, the property manager, and the business manager should all be directly responsible to the producer. Their specific duties and responsibilities are described in some detail in subsequent chapters. Assistants to these department heads, as well as the minor committee chairman, should not be the direct concern of the producer. He will find that his job is much simpler if he limits his dealings to those listed above, and lets them pass on his suggestions or directions to the members of their respective groups. He should avoid giving anyone the idea that he is interfering in any particular department. He must also remember that no minor committee member can do adequate work if he is receiving instructions from more than one individual.

Too often amateur groups allow all the responsibilities which should be the producer's to fall upon the director, but no director, exasperated with the necessity of following up the work of everybody else connected with the play in addition to his actors, can do an adequate job. It

is vitally necessary to make certain that no individual is weighed down with too much work or responsibility. One member of the group, who becomes discouraged and disheartened because he has too much to do, can dampen the spirit and enthusiasm of everyone else. It is the producer's responsibility to determine that such a condition does not arise. The selection of just the right person as the producer will insure smoothness, coordination, and the avoidance of petty jealousies and quarrels.

CHAPTER VI

THE DIRECTOR

is vitally necessary to make certain that no individual is weighed down with too much work or responsibility. One member of the group, who becomes discouraged and disheartened because he has too much to do, can hamper the spirit and enthusiasm of everyone else. It is the producer's responsibility to determine that such a condition does not arise. The selection of just the right person as the producer will insure smoothness, coordination, and the avoidance of petty jealousies and quarrels.

CHAPTER VI

THE DIRECTOR

The selection and appointment of a director is one of the most important steps in the organization of a business. It is a position of great responsibility and one which requires the highest qualifications for a good director. After a long and careful search, the board of directors has selected Mr. J. H. Smith as the director of the company. Mr. Smith is a man of high character and ability, and one who is well qualified to fill the position. He has been active in business for many years and has a wide knowledge of the industry. It is the hope of the board that Mr. Smith will bring to the company the same high standards and efficiency which he has shown in his previous work.

CHAPTER VI

THE DIRECTOR

The director of a company is the person who is responsible for the management of the company. He is the one who makes the final decisions on all matters of importance. It is his duty to see that the company is run in the most efficient manner possible. He must have a clear vision of the company's future and be able to lead the company towards that future. The director must also be a man of high character and integrity. He must be able to inspire confidence in the other members of the company. The director is the heart and soul of the company, and his actions can make or break the company. It is therefore of great importance that the director be chosen with the greatest care.

The most common mistake made in the selection of a director is to choose a man who is not qualified for the position. It is often the case that a man is chosen because he is a friend of the board or because he is a member of the same social circle. This is a dangerous practice, for it often results in the selection of a man who is not capable of doing the job. The board must remember that the director is responsible for the success or failure of the company, and therefore must be chosen on the basis of his qualifications. The board must also remember that the director must be a man of high character and integrity, for he will be responsible for the actions of the company. The board must therefore select a man who is not only qualified for the position, but who is also a man of high character and integrity.

CHAPTER VI

THE DIRECTOR

CHAPTER VI

THE DIRECTOR

The selection and appointment of a competent director is no less important than the selection of the producer or the leading actors. It is difficult to define the necessary qualifications for a good director. Allen Crafton, in his book, Play Directing, states that the director "must have some active or latent aptitude for directing If he does not read a word beyond this paragraph and remembers this one point about aptitude, the association of both of us with this book will not have been in vain." Mr. Crafton apparently does not expect that any prospective director will follow his implied advice quoted above, inasmuch as he proceeds to cover several hundred more pages with information about directing. His book as a whole is as practical as any which I have been able to find on this subject. In particular his chapter on Getting the Actors to Act gives many interesting sidelights on the subject of working with amateurs.

The most common pitfall, one which is to be avoided at all costs in the selection of a director, is the tendency to pick some individual who once went to dramatic school and has since gained a reputation as an amateur "coach." I have encountered too many of this species who

CHAPTER VI

THE DIRECTOR

The selection and appointment of a competent director is no less important than the selection of the producer or the leading actors. It is difficult to define the necessary qualifications for a good director. Allen Cresson, in his book, Play Directing, states that the director "must have some active or latent aptitude for directing. . . . If he does not read a word beyond this paragraph and remembers this one point about aptitude, the association of both of us with this book will not have been in vain." Mr. Cresson apparently does not expect that any prospective director will follow his implied advice quoted above, inasmuch as he proceeds to cover several hundred more pages with information about directing. His book as a whole is as practical as any which I have been able to find on this subject. In particular his chapter on Getting the Actors to Act gives many interesting sidelights on the subject of working with amateurs.

The most common pitfall, one which is to be avoided at all costs in the selection of a director, is the tendency to pick some individual who once went to dramatic school and has since gained a reputation as an amateur "cogeh." I have encountered too many of this species who

feel that the job of director necessitates their giving complete courses in elocution, stance, mannerisms, and all allied subjects to every individual who is acting in the play. Such instruction only serves to confuse most amateur actors, and as a result their performances are stilted and recitative.

The director need only know how people would normally behave in the situations which are being presented in his play. He is wasting his time if he concentrates on trying to make his actors always stop with the upstage foot forward, or if he tries to make them always turn toward the audience instead of away from it. If he succeeds in creating in his actors an awareness that the audience is in only one direction and that whatever they do or say must be apparent to that audience, that is sufficient. Many times the most effective line of a scene can be given with the actor facing directly away from the audience. Any instruction as to how actors should stand or sit or move can be almost identical with the description of what a character in the particular circumstances being portrayed would do in real life. If an actress must do a scene sitting on a sofa, she should sit as she would in her own living room, and need not contort her body into any awkward or uncomfortable position.

I shall make no attempt to turn this chapter into a

feel that the job of director necessitates their giving complete courses in elocution, stance, manners, and all allied subjects to every individual who is acting in the play. Such instruction only serves to confuse most amateur actors, and as a result their performances are stilted and negative.

The director need only know how people would normally behave in the situations which are being presented in his play. He is wasting his time if he concentrates on trying to make his actors always stop with the right foot forward, or if he tries to make them always turn toward the audience instead of away from it. If he succeeds in creating in his actors an awareness that the audience is in only one direction and that whatever they do or say must be apparent to that audience, that is sufficient. Many times the most effective line of a scene can be given with the actor facing directly away from the audience. Any instruction as to how actors should stand or sit or move can be almost identical with the description of what a character in the particular circumstances being portrayed would do in real life. If an actress must do a scene sitting on a sofa she should sit as she would in her own living room, and need not convert her body into any awkward or uncomfortable position.

I shall make no attempt to turn this chapter into a

complete manual for directors. That has been done before, and any would-be director, who wants to learn about his job from what someone has written about it, can find ample material in any public library.

In order to become a good director, one must do two things in addition to possessing the attributes suggested above: First, he must be familiar with plays, and the more that he has seen the better; second, he must direct plays, and the more that he has directed the better.

Every play is a challenge to the director's ingenuity. He must be thoroughly familiar with every character, every line, and every situation. He must know how he wants each part interpreted. He must teach his actors to build up to points of emphasis. All of these things must be planned before rehearsals begin, and although changes may be made and novelties introduced during the practice sessions, the good director will see that such innovations are kept to a minimum as a result of his own careful advance planning.

The director should pay particular attention to timing. Every person on stage at any time should be made to function as a member of a team, and should not be permitted to indulge in individual acting out of keeping with the stage picture. The director must always keep in mind that every character on stage must be acting every second

complete manual for directors. That has been done before, and any would-be director, who wants to learn about his job from what someone has written about it, can find ample material in any public library.

In order to become a good director, one must do two things in addition to possessing the attributes suggested above: First, he must be familiar with plays, and the more that he has seen the better; second, he must direct plays, and the more that he has directed the better.

Every play is a challenge to the director's ingenuity. He must be thoroughly familiar with every character, every line, and every situation. He must know how he wants each part interpreted. He must teach his actors to build up to points of emphasis. All of these things must be planned before rehearsals begin, and although changes may be made and novelties introduced during the practice sessions, the good director will see that such innovations are kept to a minimum as a result of his own careful advance planning.

The director should pay particular attention to timing. Every person on stage at any time should be made to function as a member of a team, and should not be permitted to indulge in individual acting out of keeping with the stage picture. The director must always keep in mind that every character on stage must be acting every second

that he is visible to the audience. Careful consideration of stage business is no less important than the proper delivery of the actors' lines. Emotional scenes are particularly difficult to handle, and may easily be over-directed. It is frequently far better to try to get the participants in such scenes to understand exactly how the scenes should be given, and then turn them loose and let them give their own interpretations. The director who attempts to prescribe every mannerism, every change in tone, will find that he is only confusing his players.

Every director must beware of actors who know more, or think they know more, than he does. Polite firmness is usually sufficient to get the idea over that the director is boss, but if this fails, the producer must step in and straighten out the situation. I remember one occasion during the first-night presentation of The Night of January 16th when an actor, at a very dramatic point in the play, proceeded to extend a "dramatic pause," while he was the center of attention on the stage, to such a length that the other actors, who were supposed to be frozen in position during this moment of suspense, began to totter before the action was resumed. The prompter became excited, thinking that the actor had forgotten his next line, and whispered it from the wings three times in quick succession in increasingly audible tones. As a result, the whole scene, which

that he is visible to the audience. Careful consideration

of stage business is no less important than the proper

delivery of the actor's lines. Emotional scenes are particu-

larly difficult to handle, and may easily be over-directed.

It is frequently far better to try to get the participants

in such scenes to understand exactly how the scenes should

be given, and then turn them loose and let them give their

own interpretations. The director who attempts to prescribe

every mannerism, every chance in tone, will find that he is

only confusing his players.

Every director must beware of actors who know more,

or think they know more, than he does. Polite firmness is

usually sufficient to set the idea over that the director

is boss, but if this fails, the producer must step in and

straighten out the situation. I remember one occasion dur-

ing the first-night presentation of The Night of January

16th when an actor, at a very dramatic point in the play,

proceeded to extend a "dramatic pause," while he was the

center of attention on the stage, to such a length that the

other actors, who were supposed to be frozen in position

during this moment of suspense, began to fidget before the

action was resumed. The prompter became excited, thinking

that the actor had forgotten his next line, and whispered it

from the wings three times in quick succession in increas-

ingly audible tones. As a result, the whole scene, which

was supposed to be deadly serious, became almost ludicrous, what with the wavering statues on the stage and the loud whisper issuing from nowhere in particular. This whole situation was occasioned by an actor deliberately varying from the directions which he had received and complied with all during the rehearsal period.

The first responsibility of every director is, of course, the selection of a cast. If this is done carefully, many of the difficulties already suggested can be obviated. Any director will do well to utilize the assistance of the producer and one or two other club members on the casting committee. In working with amateurs, the matter of try-outs must be carefully handled. Personal feelings must be considered and it may frequently become necessary to induce would-be actors to play parts other than those in which they are most interested, but for which they are better suited.

It is well to use discretion in choosing the passages to be read by those trying out. I know of one organization which was attempting to cast Murray Hill and unfortunately chose a love scene as one of the portions to be read. One of the actors did this scene so very well, with a charming new-comer to the community playing opposite him, that his wife raised serious objections and refused to let him participate in the play at all. The general

was supposed to be deadly serious, became almost ludicrous what with the wavering stances on the stage and the loud whisper issuing from nowhere in particular. This whole situation was occasioned by an actor deliberately varying from the directions which he had received and complied with all during the rehearsal period.

The first responsibility of every director is, of course, the selection of a cast. If this is done carefully, many of the difficulties already suggested can be avoided. Any director will do well to utilize the assistance of the producer and one or two other club members on the casting committee. In working with amateurs, the matter of type cuts must be carefully handled. Personal feelings must be considered and it may frequently become necessary to induce would-be actors to play parts other than those in which they are most interested, but for which they are better suited.

It is well to use discretion in choosing the scenes to be read by those trying out. I know of one or two amateur organizations which were attempting to cast Murray Hill and unfortunately chose a love scene as one of the portions to be read. One of the actors did this scene so very well, with a charming new-comer to the community playing opposite him, that his wife raised serious objections and refused to let him participate in the play at all. The general

tone of all try-outs should be one of informality. Great care should be taken to avoid embarrassment on the parts of prospective actors. Those who do not succeed in getting parts should have the reasons carefully explained to them, and frequently an offer of a smaller part or a position as a committee chairman will serve to soothe any possible wounded feelings. All prospects should be made aware of the club's gratitude for their willingness to try out. If this step is forgotten, actors who might be of great value in future presentations may be lost to the club permanently because of a single disappointment. If a sufficient number of actors is available to provide under-studies for the principal roles, such assignments frequently make excellent consolation prizes also. Under-studies should be encouraged to attend rehearsals occasionally, and in the event that a play is to be given on several different nights, it is not uncommon to permit an under-study to act in one of the performances.

Most dramatic clubs will find it impractical to hold rehearsals on the stage where the play is to be presented. However, it is essential that the space in which rehearsals are held be identical with the acting space on the stage to be used. If this precaution is not taken, the timing of the entire play may be thrown off when the actors are finally placed in the wide open spaces of the actual stage. The

tone of all try-outs should be one of informality. Great

care should be taken to avoid embarrassment on the parts of prospective actors. Those who do not succeed in getting parts should have the reasons carefully explained to them, and frequently an offer of a smaller part or a position as a committee chairman will serve to soothe any possible

wounded feelings. All prospects should be made aware of the club's attitude for their willingness to try out. If this step is forgotten, actors who might be of great value in future presentations may be lost to the club permanently because of a simple disappointment. It is sufficient

number of actors is available to provide under-studies for the principal roles, such assignments frequently make excellent consolation prizes also. Under-studies should be encouraged to attend rehearsals occasionally, and in the event that a play is to be given on several different

nights, it is not uncommon to permit an under-study to act in one of the performances.

Most dramatic clubs will find it impractical to hold rehearsals on the stage where the play is to be presented. However, it is essential that the space in which rehearsals are held be identical with the acting space on the stage to be used. If this precaution is not taken, the timing of the entire play may be thrown off when the actors are finally placed in the wide open spaces of the actual stage. The

reverse of this can be just as tragic where plenty of room is available for rehearsals, but the stage itself is cramped and inadequate. The stage properties should be improvised for all rehearsals. It may not seem important whether an actor who is supposed to remove a letter from his pocket and hand it to another goes through the motions without actually delivering the letter or whether he really hands the letter over during the rehearsals. However, the audience will demand the realism of seeing something actually change hands and will only be amused at any attempt short of the real thing. The actor who has been accustomed all during the rehearsal period to checking the presence of an actual letter in his pocket prior to his entrance will be far less likely to be caught without it on opening night. The furniture used in rehearsals should be as close to the approximate size and type of that to be used in the final production as possible. The actress who has been rehearsing a scene on a straight-backed hard-bottomed chair from which she must rise quickly can be terribly embarrassed when she finds herself, during the actual play, seated in a soft comfortable easy chair from which she has difficulty in arising at all to say nothing of accomplishing this move with any alacrity.

A director can avoid having his actors go stale on him if the entire period of rehearsals is condensed into

Reverse of this can be just as tragic where plenty of room is available for rehearsal, but the stage itself is cramped and inadequate. The stage properties should be improvised for all rehearsals. It may not seem important whether an actor who is supposed to remove a letter from his pocket and hand it to another goes through the motions without actually delivering the letter or whether he really hands the letter over during the rehearsal. However, the audience will demand the realism of seeing something actually change hands and will only be amused at any attempt short of the real thing. The actor who has been accustomed all during the rehearsal period to checking the presence of an actual letter in his pocket prior to his entrance will be far less likely to be caught without it on opening night. The furniture used in rehearsals should be as close to the approximate size and type of that to be used in the final production as possible. The actress who has been rehearsing a scene on a straight-backed hard-bottomed chair from which she must rise quickly can be terribly embarrassed when she finds herself, during the actual play, seated in a soft comfortable easy chair from which she has difficulty in arising at all to say nothing of accomplishing this move with any alacrity.

A director can avoid having his actors go stale on him if the entire period of rehearsal is condensed into

a sufficiently short space of time. For most plays a period not to exceed three or four weeks should be ample.

Samuel French publishes a small booklet entitled The Art of Rehearsal, by Bernard Shaw, the perusal of which is well worth a few minutes of any would-be director's time. This booklet is full of worthwhile suggestions such as the following: ". . . Before you begin rehearsing . . . work out all the stage business . . . don't let them learn their parts until the end of the first week of rehearsal . . . Never interrupt a scene . . . make a note . . . don't mention trifles . . . Never have a moment of silence on the stage except as an intentional stage effect."

In short, a director needs an aptitude for his job, common sense, patience, and tact coupled with the ability to correct and help without seeming to order. He, himself, must be amenable to suggestion. Many times he will find excellent ideas coming from the actors themselves.

a sufficiently short space of time. For most plays a period not to exceed three or four weeks should be ample.

Samuel French publishes a small booklet entitled

The Art of Rehearsal, by Bernard Shaw, the general of

which is well worth a few minutes of any would-be direc-

tor's time. This booklet is full of worthwhile sugges-

tions such as the following: ". . . Before you begin re-

hearsing . . . work out all the stage business . . . don't

let them learn their parts until the end of the first week

of rehearsal . . . Never interrupt a scene . . . make a

note . . . don't mention trifles . . . Never have a moment

of silence on the stage except as an intentional stage

effect."

In short, a director needs an attitude for his job,

common sense, patience, and tact coupled with the ability

to correct and help without seeming to order. He, himself,

must be amenable to suggestion. Many times he will find

excellent ideas coming from the actors themselves.

CHAPTER VII

THE STAGE SETTING

By the time the play to be presented has been selected, the producer and director appointed, the casting finished, and the department heads chosen, plans for the stage setting should be well under way. There are four basic questions to be considered: What is available for use, either as a possession of the club itself or owned by some nearby organization willing to lend it, what can be improvised, what can be made, and what must be bought or rented. In most small communities there are several interior stage sets owned by different organizations. Most of such organizations are quite willing to lend scenery without charge, but they usually insist that no changes be made in any of the equipment loaned. The typical interior setting is usually neutral in color with painted panels, mouldings, and shadows that look exactly like painted panels, mouldings, and shadows. If the club has no means of acquiring anything better for its use, it must be satisfied with such scenery. If it has funds available for the purchase or rental of scenery, I would definitely suggest that it neither buy nor hire anything unless there are no facilities whatever available for the construction of a set. Scenery purchased ready-made or scenery which is made to order is

CHAPTER VII

THE STAGE SETTING

Most of such organizations are quite willing to lend scenery without charge, but they usually insist that no changes be made in any of the equipment loaned. The typical interior setting is usually neutral in color with painted panels, mouldings, and shadows that look exactly like painted panels, mouldings, and shadows. If the club has no means of acquiring anything better for its use, it must be satisfied with such scenery. If it has funds available for the purchase or rental of scenery, I would definitely suggest that it neither buy nor hire anything unless there are no facilities whatever available for the construction of a set. Scenery purchased ready-made or scenery which is made to order is

CHAPTER VII

THE STAGE SETTING

always exorbitantly expensive CHAPTER VII about the same amount as would be paid for hiring a set of scenery including the shipping charges, a good serviceable set can be constructed.

THE STAGE SETTING

By the time the play to be presented has been selected, the producer and director appointed, the casting finished, and the department heads chosen, plans for the stage setting should be well under way. There are four basic questions to be considered: What is available for use, either as a possession of the club itself or owned by some nearby organization willing to lend it, what can be improvised, what can be made, and what must be bought or rented. In most small communities there are several interior stage sets owned by different organizations. Most of such organizations are quite willing to lend scenery without charge, but they usually insist that no changes be made in any of the equipment loaned. The typical interior setting is usually neutral in color with painted panels, mouldings, and shadows that look exactly like painted panels, mouldings, and shadows. If the club has no means of acquiring anything better for its use, it must be satisfied with such scenery. If it has funds available for the purchase or rental of scenery, I would definitely suggest that it neither buy nor hire anything unless there are no facilities whatever available for the construction of a set. Scenery purchased ready-made or scenery which is made to order is

CHAPTER VII

THE STAGE SETTING

By the time the play to be presented has been selected, the producer and director appointed, the casting finished, and the department heads chosen, plans for the stage setting should be well under way. There are four basic questions to be considered: What is available for use, either as a possession of the club itself or owned by some nearby organization willing to lend it, what can be improvised, what can be made, and what must be bought or rented. In most small communities there are several interior stage sets owned by different organizations. Most of such organizations are quite willing to lend scenery without charge, but they usually insist that no changes be made in any of the equipment loaned. The typical interior setting is usually neutral in color with painted panels, moldings, and shadows that look exactly like painted panels, moldings, and shadows. If the club has no means of acquiring anything better for its use, it must be satisfied with such scenery. If it has funds available for the purchase or rental of scenery, I would definitely suggest that it neither buy nor hire anything unless there are no facilities whatever available for the construction of a set. Scenery purchased ready-made or scenery which is made to order is

always exorbitantly expensive, and for about the same amount as would be paid for hiring a set of scenery including the shipping charges, a good serviceable set can be constructed.

I shall make no attempt to turn this into a construction manual, but a few details will perhaps not be out of order. Frames for flat scenery can be made of three-inch by one-inch seasoned pine. Corners can be joined easily, as indicated in the attached diagram, by the use of corner triangles made of quarter-inch plywood nailed to the frame by means of clinch nails. To insure square corners, the two sides should be held flush against a large carpenter's square while this operation is accomplished.

These frames should be covered with scenery canvas which is made of closely woven, first-grade cotton yarn. This is strong and durable and usually comes in a seventy-two inch width. The frame to be covered should be laid on a level floor with the smooth side up. The fabric to be used should be cut to the proper length and width with approximately four inches over on each dimension. It should then be stretched over the frame so that the extra width extends about evenly on all sides and fastened temporarily with one tack at each corner. Next the canvas is tacked to the wood approximately one inch from the inner edge of the frame all the way around. The cloth should be kept taut during the entire operation so that no wrinkles are left when

always exorbitantly expensive, and for about the same amount as would be paid for hiring a set of scenery including the shipping charges, a good serviceable set can be constructed. I shall make no attempt to turn this into a construction manual, but a few details will perhaps not be out of order. Frames for flat scenery can be made of three-inch by one-inch seasoned pine. Corners can be joined easily, as indicated in the attached diagram, by the use of corner triangles made of quarter-inch plywood nailed to the frame by means of clinch nails. To insure square corners, the two sides should be held flush against a large carpenter's square while this operation is accomplished.

These frames should be covered with scenery canvas which is made of closely woven, first-grade cotton yarn. This is strong and durable and usually comes in a seventy-two inch width. The frame to be covered should be laid on a level floor with the smooth side up. The fabric to be used should be cut to the proper length and width with approximately four inches over on each dimension. It should then be stretched over the frame so that the extra width extends about evenly on all sides and fastened temporarily with one tack at each corner. Next the canvas is tacked to the wood approximately one inch from the inner edge of the frame all the way around. The cloth should be kept taut during the entire operation so that no wrinkles are left when

FIGURE 4

Method for Constructing and Covering Flat Scenery

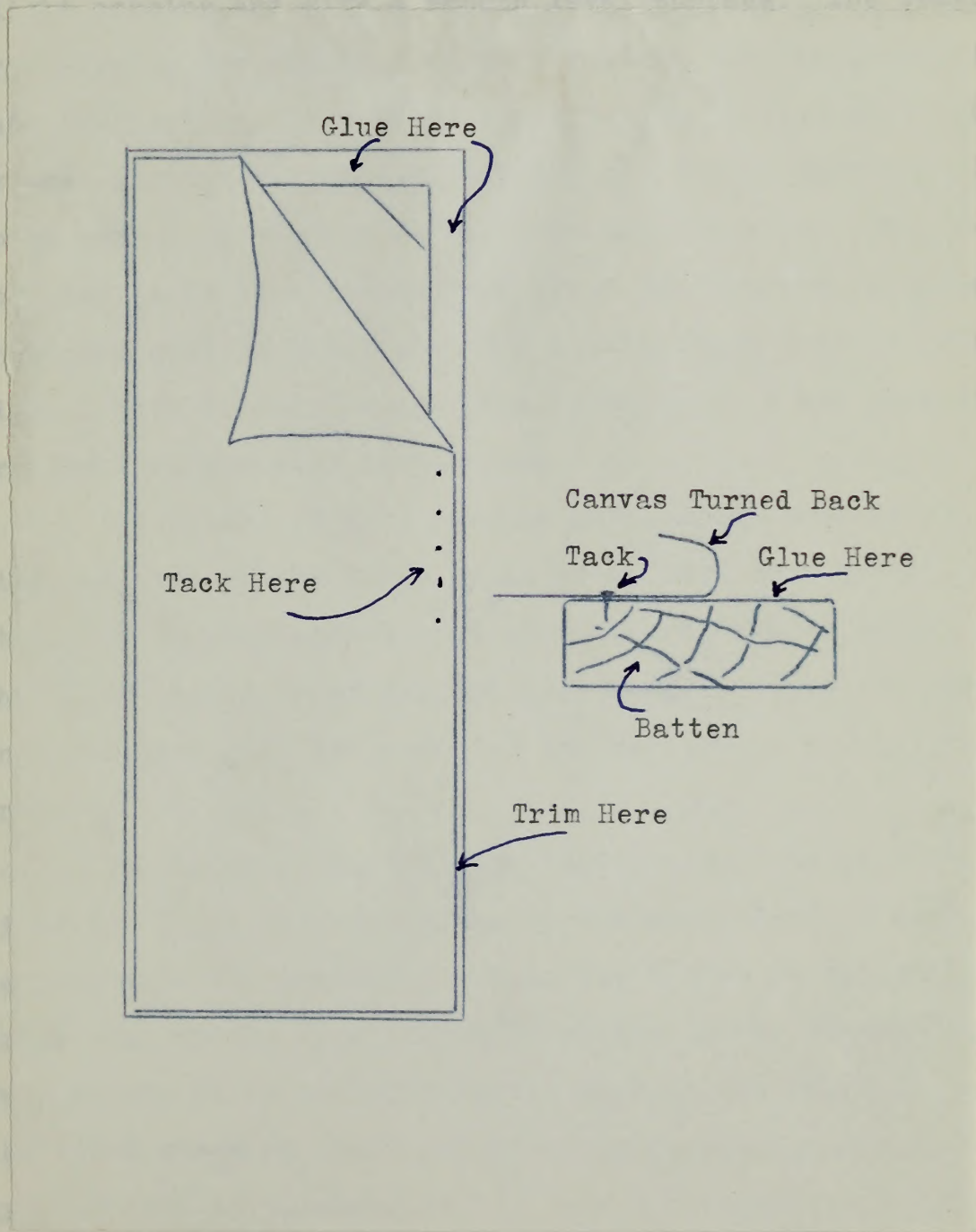


FIGURE 4

Method for Constructing and Governing First Scenario

1.1.1.1

1.1.1.1.1
1.1.1.1.2
1.1.1.1.3
1.1.1.1.4
1.1.1.1.5
1.1.1.1.6
1.1.1.1.7
1.1.1.1.8
1.1.1.1.9
1.1.1.1.10
1.1.1.1.11
1.1.1.1.12
1.1.1.1.13
1.1.1.1.14
1.1.1.1.15
1.1.1.1.16
1.1.1.1.17
1.1.1.1.18
1.1.1.1.19
1.1.1.1.20
1.1.1.1.21
1.1.1.1.22
1.1.1.1.23
1.1.1.1.24
1.1.1.1.25
1.1.1.1.26
1.1.1.1.27
1.1.1.1.28
1.1.1.1.29
1.1.1.1.30
1.1.1.1.31
1.1.1.1.32
1.1.1.1.33
1.1.1.1.34
1.1.1.1.35
1.1.1.1.36
1.1.1.1.37
1.1.1.1.38
1.1.1.1.39
1.1.1.1.40
1.1.1.1.41
1.1.1.1.42
1.1.1.1.43
1.1.1.1.44
1.1.1.1.45
1.1.1.1.46
1.1.1.1.47
1.1.1.1.48
1.1.1.1.49
1.1.1.1.50
1.1.1.1.51
1.1.1.1.52
1.1.1.1.53
1.1.1.1.54
1.1.1.1.55
1.1.1.1.56
1.1.1.1.57
1.1.1.1.58
1.1.1.1.59
1.1.1.1.60
1.1.1.1.61
1.1.1.1.62
1.1.1.1.63
1.1.1.1.64
1.1.1.1.65
1.1.1.1.66
1.1.1.1.67
1.1.1.1.68
1.1.1.1.69
1.1.1.1.70
1.1.1.1.71
1.1.1.1.72
1.1.1.1.73
1.1.1.1.74
1.1.1.1.75
1.1.1.1.76
1.1.1.1.77
1.1.1.1.78
1.1.1.1.79
1.1.1.1.80
1.1.1.1.81
1.1.1.1.82
1.1.1.1.83
1.1.1.1.84
1.1.1.1.85
1.1.1.1.86
1.1.1.1.87
1.1.1.1.88
1.1.1.1.89
1.1.1.1.90
1.1.1.1.91
1.1.1.1.92
1.1.1.1.93
1.1.1.1.94
1.1.1.1.95
1.1.1.1.96
1.1.1.1.97
1.1.1.1.98
1.1.1.1.99
1.1.1.1.100

the tacking is complete. There is no necessity to stretch the canvas too tightly, however, inasmuch as the first coat of paint will shrink the cloth sufficiently to remove any slight sagging and give a smooth level surface. The temporary tacks at the corners are then removed and the loose cloth laid back toward the center. Casein glue is applied to the exposed portion of the wooden frame all the way around. The loose canvas is pressed firmly onto the wet glue. The excess canvas is then trimmed off about one-quarter inch inside the outer edge of the frame with a very sharp knife or razor blade. This forces the cut edge into the wood and prevents fraying when the flat is handled.

The height of flat scenery may vary in accordance with the size of the stage to be used. For most small stages, a maximum height of ten or eleven feet is ample. The flats should be of varying widths from one to six feet in accordance with the needs of the particular play to be produced.

No pieces should be constructed with cut-out portions for doors and windows as is the usual case in most scenery made for amateurs. It is far better to set and brace real wooden door frames or window frames between two full-length flats and construct a smaller flat to fill in the space above or above and below as required. The best type of door to purchase is the common combination screen

the facing is complete. There is no necessity to stretch the canvas too tightly, however, inasmuch as the first coat of paint will shrink the cloth sufficiently to remove any slight sagging and give a smooth level surface. The temporary tacks at the corners are then removed and the loose cloth laid back toward the center. Cassin glue is applied to the exposed portion of the wooden frame all the way around. The loose canvas is pressed firmly onto the wet glue. The excess canvas is then trimmed off about one-quarter inch inside the outer edge of the frame with a very sharp knife or razor blade. This forces the cut edge into the wood and prevents fraying when the flat is handled.

The height of flat scenery may vary in accordance with the size of the stage to be used. For most small stages, a maximum height of ten or eleven feet is ample. The flats should be of varying widths from one to six feet in accordance with the needs of the particular play to be produced.

No pieces should be constructed with cut-out portions for doors and windows as is the usual case in most scenery made for amateurs. It is far better to set and brace real wooden door frames or window frames between two full-length flats and construct a smaller flat to fill in the space above or above and below as required. The best type of door to purchase is the common combination screen

and glass window-light door sold by Sears Roebuck or any construction company. These doors come already set in a frame, and have the two interchangeable panels already indicated. Additional panels can be easily constructed out of plywood; with a few moulding strips they can be made into any type of door that is required. Additional realism and strength is added to the setting if wooden mop boards, chair rails, and picture rails are nailed onto the set itself. Actual shadows are thereby created and the third dimensional effect gained surpasses anything that can be accomplished by the most expert scenic artist. Such mouldings are easy to remove from the setting after each play, with no permanent harm to the scenery, and they may be used again and again in varying forms. plate of the brace into the stage floor.

The use of such wooden construction as an addition to the ordinary scenery made of canvas flats, gives an actual as well as an apparent solidity to the setting. Such doors and windows open and close like real doors and windows because they are real doors and windows. And a person leaving the stage in a supposed fit of anger can actually go out and slam the door behind him as if he meant it. I was witness to one occasion when this happened, and one of the stage hands had carelessly left a hammer on the top of the door frame outside the set. The hammer was jarred from its perch and fell upon the head of an actress who was waiting her cue to go on stage.

and glass window-light door sold by Sears Roebuck or any construction company. These doors come already set in a frame, and have the two interchangeable panels already installed. Additional panels can be easily constructed out of plywood; with a few moulding strips they can be made into any type of door that is required. Additional realism and strength is added to the setting if wooden mop boards, chair rails, and picture rails are nailed onto the set itself. Actual shadows are thereby created and the third dimensional effect gained surpasses anything that can be accomplished by the most expert scenic artist. Such mouldings are easy to remove from the setting after each play, with no permanent harm to the scenery, and they may be used again and again in varying forms.

The use of such wooden construction as an addition to the ordinary scenery made of canvas flats, gives an actual as well as an apparent solidity to the setting. Such doors and windows open and close like real doors and windows because they are real doors and windows. And a person leaving the stage in a supposed fit of anger can actually go out and slam the door behind him as if he meant it. I was witness to one occasion when this happened, and one of the stage hands had carelessly left a hammer on the top of the door frame outside the set. The hammer was jarred from its perch and fell upon the head of an actress who was waiting her cue to go on stage.

The entire action of the play was delayed for at least five minutes while the actress was being resuscitated and the actors remaining on the stage talked about the weather or any other topic that came to mind after one of them had walked over to the prompter in order to find out what was causing the delay.

In order to secure scenery firmly in place, the purchase of a number of professional stage braces from a theatrical supply house is recommended. These braces are a standard item and are easily put in place merely by hooking the top end through a screw eye or scenery cleat fastened on the back of the flat, and securing the bottom end by means of a stage screw which is screwed through a hole in the base plate of the brace into the stage floor. These braces are variable in length, and after both ends are secured, they may be extended or shortened and made fast by means of a thumb screw attachment when the flat is absolutely vertical.

Adjoining flats are secured one to the other by means of a lash line which is fastened near the top of one edge of a flat and then laced around lash cleats placed at different heights on that and the adjoining flat. The lash line should be tied firmly with a half bow approximately three feet above the stage floor.

Wherever it is possible in setting up the scenery

The entire action of the play was delayed for at least five minutes while the actress was being resuscitated and the actors remaining on the stage talked about the weather or any other topic that came to mind after one of them had walked over to the prompter in order to find out what was causing the delay.

In order to secure scenery firmly in place, the purchase of a number of professional stage braces from a theatrical supply house is recommended. These braces are a standard item and are easily put in place merely by hooking the top end through a screw eye or scenery cleat fastened on the back of the flat, and securing the bottom end by means of a stage screw which is screwed through a hole in the base plate of the brace into the stage floor. These braces are variable in length, and after both ends are secured, they may be extended or shortened and made fast by means of a thumb screw attachment when the flat is absolutely vertical.

Joining flats are secured one to the other by means of a lash line which is fastened near the top of one edge of a flat and then laced around lash cleats placed at different heights on that and the adjoining flat. The lash line should be tied firmly with a half bow approximately three feet above the stage floor. Whenever it is possible in setting up the scenery

FIGURE 5

Method of Lashing and Bracing Scenery

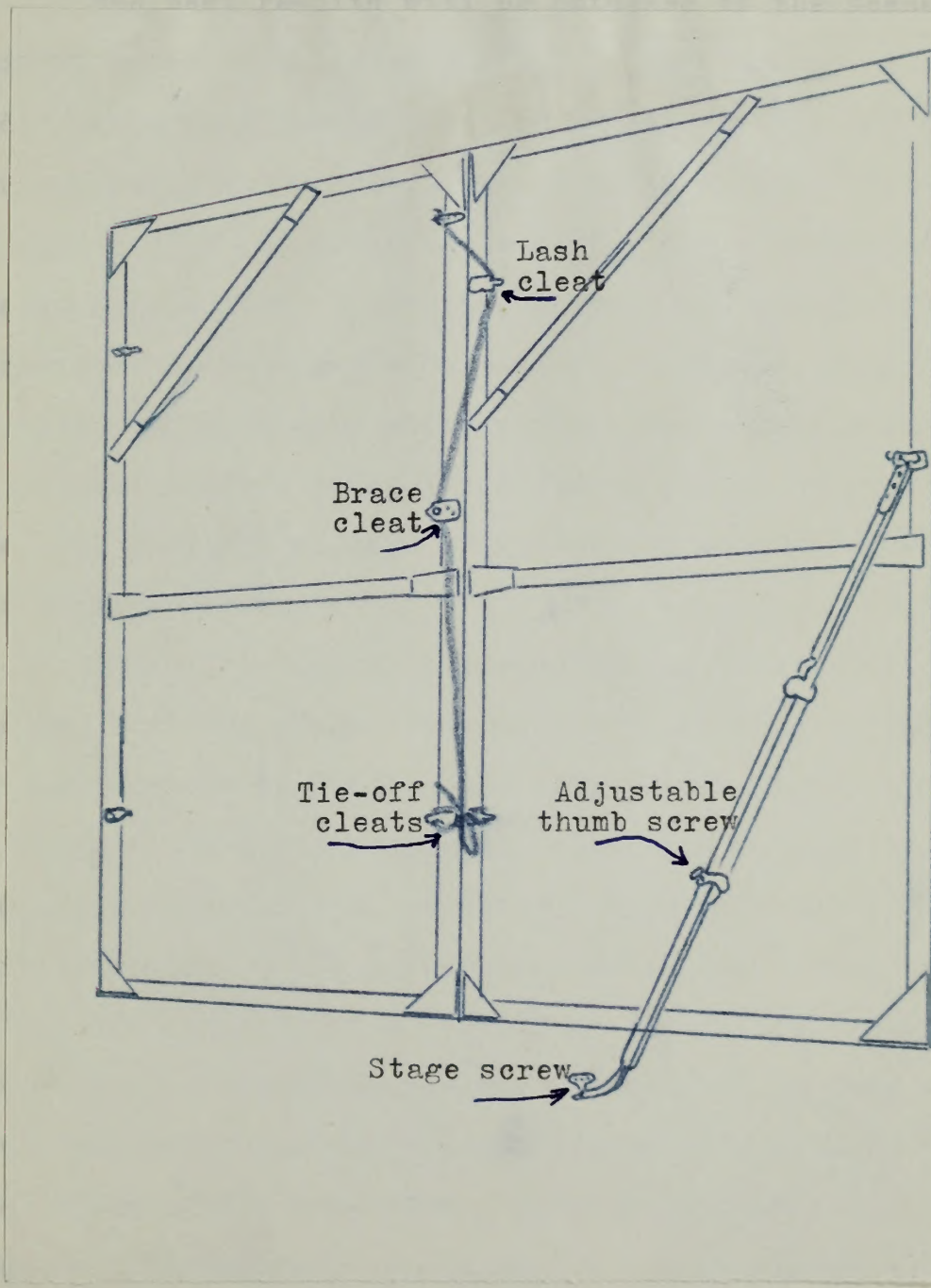


FIGURE 2

Method of Taphin and Greene's Economy

1911

to insert jogs or recesses, not only will variety be gained from the usual three-sided room effect, but much strength will be added to the standing set.

The best results will be obtained if the scenery is painted after it has been set up in position on the stage, and I have found casein paint to be better than any of the usually recommended hot-glue-base water paints. This use of casein glue and paint is evidently rather unorthodox, inasmuch as almost none of the authors who have written concerning scene painting recommend it. However, I have found it easy to mix, cheap, and durable. The same scenery can be painted several times in different colors to suit the needs of successive plays without the necessity of washing off previous coats.

After the scenery has been set in place, strips of canvas about six inches wide should be thoroughly immersed in the paint to be used on the set. These strips should then be placed over all cracks where flats are joined together and pressed firmly into position. Next, newspaper or building paper having been placed under the bottom edges of all the standing flats, paint should be applied to the entire set. Several people can participate in this operation simultaneously and the job should be completed without ever allowing the edge of any painted portion to dry. This process will insure a setting which looks exactly like the

to insert joins or recesses, not only will variety be gained from the usual three-sided room effect, but such strength will be added to the standing set.

The best results will be obtained if the scenery is painted after it has been set up in position on the stage, and I have found casein paint to be better than any of the usually recommended hot-air-dry water paints. This use of casein paint and paint is evidently rather unorthodox.

Inasmuch as almost none of the authors who have written concerning scene painting recommend it. However, I have found it easy to mix, cheap, and durable. The same scenery can be painted several times in different colors to suit the needs of successive plays without the necessity of washing off previous coats.

After the scenery has been set in place, strips of canvas about six inches wide should be thoroughly immersed in the paint to be used on the set. These strips should then be placed over all cracks where flats are joined together and pressed firmly into position. Next, newspaper or building paper having been placed under the bottom edges of all the standing flats, paint should be applied to the entire set. Several people can participate in this operation simultaneously and the job should be completed without ever allowing the edge of any painted portion to dry. This process will insure a setting which looks exactly like the

plastered and painted walls of any room. If a wall-paper effect is desired, it is easy to cut a stencil out of a piece of stiff cardboard. This is used to transfer the pattern selected to the setting by means of a short-bristled stencil brush applied to the outside of the stencil while it is being held manually in successive positions. The books in the bibliography which are recommended for scene painting information give several other methods of varying a plain colored wall by means of stippling and so forth.

To insure the effectiveness of any interior setting, a ceiling should be provided. The construction of an adequate ceiling is really a simpler job than the making of an ordinary flat. Strips of canvas are sewed together to make one large piece of sufficient size to cover the necessary area, and the piece is then tacked to the front and back battens only. When the ceiling is not in use, it may be rolled up on these two battens, and when it is to be set up, the battens are merely unrolled and additional cross battens placed at right angles to them and fastened by angle irons and thumb screws. The cross battens must be of sufficient length to insure adequate tautness of the ceiling. The ceiling can be raised into place manually by a couple of people with step ladders without the assistance of any over-head lines, except possibly one in the center of the front batten. The set itself gives

illustrated and painted walls of any room. If a wall-paper
 effect is desired, it is easy to cut a special cut of a
 piece of still cardboard. This is used to transfer the
 pattern selected to the setting by means of a sharp-pointed
 stencil brush applied to the outside of the stencil while
 it is being held manually in successive positions. The
 parts in the background which are recommended for some
 existing information where several other methods of varying
 a plain colored wall by means of stenciling and so forth.
 To insure the attractiveness of any interior setting,
 a ceiling should be provided. The construction of an ade-
 quate ceiling is really a complicated job than the making of
 an ordinary flat. Strips of canvas are sewed together to
 make one large piece of sufficient size to cover the neces-
 sary area, and the piece is then tacked to the front and
 back battens only. When the ceiling is not in use, it may
 be rolled up on three two battens, and when it is to be
 set up, the battens are merely unrolled and additional
 cross battens placed at right angles to them and fastened
 by elastic straps and thumb screws. The cross battens must
 be of sufficient length to insure adequate fastness of
 the ceiling. The ceiling can be raised into place manu-
 ally by a couple of people with steel ladders without the
 assistance of any over-head lines, except possibly one in
 the center of the front batten. The net itself gives

support to the other three sides of the ceiling. If bleached cotton is used, it is not even necessary to paint it, unless it becomes soiled, in which case it may prove easier to paint it than to wash it.

The type of scenery described in this chapter can be very easily adapted for a play with two or more interior settings with a minimum of scene shifting. Several years ago, I staged Philip Barrie's Holiday which calls for the same setting in the first and third acts, but a different setting for the second act. All the flats in the set were painted basically with a neutral beige. Next, two spatter coats, one of blue and one of yellow, were applied to the set. Spatter painting is very easy and can be a great deal of fun. The painters merely dip their brushes into the bucket and wave them, full of paint, in the direction of the surface to be painted. It is a little difficult at first to secure an even coating in this manner, but a very small amount of practice will insure an adequate job. By varying the lighting in the different acts, the shade of the entire set was made to change. Thus the impression was given that entirely different flats were used. Of course, all the stage furniture and properties had to be changed, and in addition, all doors and windows for both sets were recessed by flats one or two feet in width, so that in the space where a door had appeared in one scene, a flat could be

support to the other three sides of the ceiling. If bleached cotton is used, it is not even necessary to paint it, unless it becomes soiled, in which case it may prove easier to paint it than to wash it.

The type of scenery described in this chapter can be very easily adapted for a play with two or three interior settings with a minimum of scene shifting. Several years ago, I staged White Powder's Holiday which calls for the same setting in the first and third acts, but a different setting for the second act. All the flats in the set were painted pastels with a neutral beige. Next, two spatter coats, one of blue and one of yellow, were applied to the set. Spatter painting is very easy and can be a great deal of fun. The painters merely dip their brushes into the back of the can and wave them, full of paint, in the direction of the surface to be painted. It is a little different at first to secure an even coating in this manner, but a very small amount of practice will insure an adequate job. By varying the lighting in the different acts, the shade of the entire set was made to change. Thus the impression was given that entirely different flats were used. Of course, all the stage furniture and properties had to be changed, and in addition, all doors and windows for both acts were recessed by flats one or two feet in width, so that in the space where a door had appeared in one scene, a flat could be

inserted flush with the walls on both sides of the recess and only the plain wall was visible. Similarly another flat would be removed disclosing a broad window and window seat where there had formerly been only a straight wall. Thereby, with the shifting of only two or three flats and varying the basic lighting, one set of scenery definitely served the purpose of two.

Many settings require steps and stairways. It is not advisable to spend much time and effort on such construction for one particular play. It is thus that many clubs find themselves with monstrosities on their hands which they may never be able to use more than once. For the club which is beginning to build up a stock of useful scenery, it might be advisable to construct two identical units of two steps each and a platform equal in height to three steps. These will be adaptable to a number of different combinations which will answer almost every purpose. Such things as railings, balustrades, and newel posts can be constructed for individual plays and attached at small expense. The box made as a platform should be constructed with a hinged cover, and this may be used as a container for the storage of small properties between plays. Figure 6 gives an idea of the varying forms in which these three pieces may be arranged. As future needs arise, duplicates of any of the pieces may be constructed and adapted to use

inserted film with the walls on both sides of the recess and only the plain wall was visible. Similarly another flat would be removed disclosing a broad window and window seat where there had formerly been only a straight wall. Thereby, with the shifting of only two or three flats and varying the basic lighting, one set of scenery definitely served the purpose of two.

Many settings require stairs and stairways. It is not advisable to spend much time and effort on such construction for one particular play. It is true that many clubs find themselves with necessities on their hands which they may never be able to use more than once. For the club which is determined to build up a stock of useful scenery, it might be advisable to construct two identical units of two steps each and a platform equal in height to three steps. These will be adaptable to a number of different combinations which will answer almost every purpose. Such things as railings, balustrades, and newel posts can be constructed for individual plays and attached at small expense. The box made as a platform should be constructed with a hinged cover, and this may be used as a container for the storage of small properties between plays. Figure 6 gives an idea of the various forms in which these three pieces may be arranged. As future needs arise, duplicates of any of the pieces may be constructed and added to use

FIGURE 6

Stairway Arrangements

(Possible basic variations using only three simple pieces.)

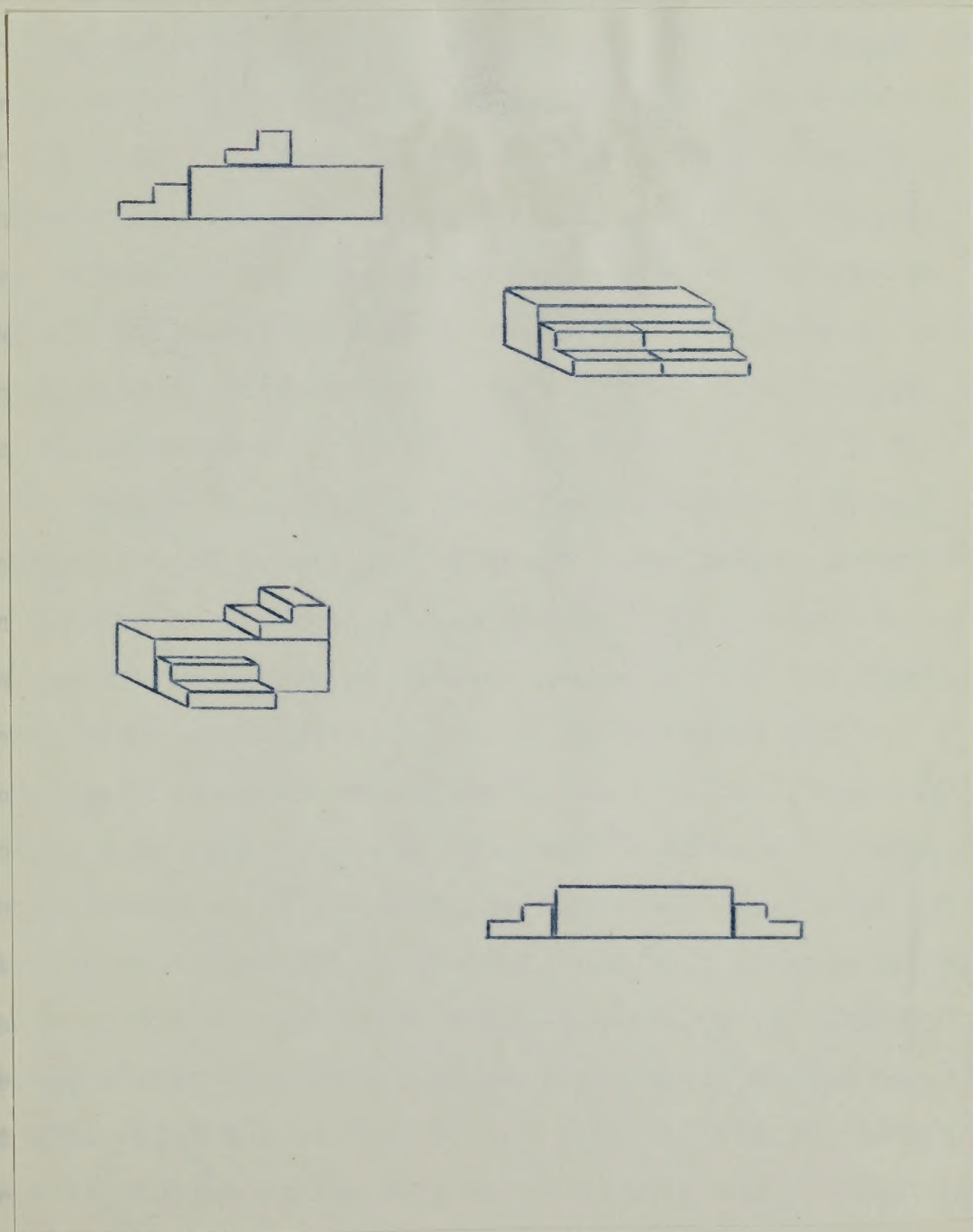


FIGURE 1

Stairway Arrangement

(Possible basic variations using only three simple pieces.)

1 2 3

with those made previously.

One other bulky item which is frequently required in interior settings is a fireplace. One such piece, made with interchangeable inserts to vary the shape of the opening and the interior of the firebox, should be sufficient. The exterior of the fireplace can be altered easily with a coat of paint to represent marble, wood paneling, brick, or whatever is required. The fireplace should be put into the set in exactly the same manner as door or window frames, namely, it should be placed between two full-length flats and a shorter flat used to fill the space from the mantle to the ceiling.

Never be afraid to use a few well-placed nails whenever it is necessary. I shall never forget a moment in an amateur production of Night Must Fall, when one of the actors was supposed to lean casually on the mantle. Those responsible for the scenic arrangements had not considered it necessary to fasten this piece to the set in any way. The weight of the actor's elbow was consequently sufficient to unbalance the whole fireplace. As it started to fall, the actor who had been leaning on it had sufficient presence of mind to catch it in mid-air. He was too late, however, to retrieve an expensive borrowed vase which had started to its doom, but which fortunately fell in the lap of the actress to whom he was talking who

with those made previously.

One other bulky item which is frequently required in interior settings is a fireplace. One such piece, made with interchangeable inserts to vary the shape of the opening and the interior of the firebox, should be sufficient. The exterior of the fireplace can be altered easily with a coat of paint to represent marble, wood paneling, brick, or whatever is required. The fireplace should be put into the set in exactly the same manner as door or window frames, namely, it should be placed between two full-length flats and a shorter flat used to fill the space from the mantle to the ceiling.

Never be afraid to use a few well-placed nails whenever it is necessary. I shall never forget a moment in an amateur production of What Nuts Fall, when one of the actors was supposed to lean casually on the mantle. Those responsible for the scenic arrangements had not considered it necessary to fasten this piece to the set in any way. The weight of the actor's elbow was consequently sufficient to unbalance the whole fireplace. As it started to fall, the actor who had been leaning on it had sufficient presence of mind to catch it in mid-air. He was too late, however, to retrieve an expensive borrowed vase which had started to its doom, but which fortunately fell in the lap of the actress to whom he was talking who

was seated before the hearth. Their agility was rewarded by a round of applause from the audience. Although the applause may have been appreciated by the actors, it could hardly be considered as any real reward for the weeks of effort which they had put into rehearsals.

Exterior settings and background scenery are bugaboos to most small organizations. Usually, attempts to achieve realism by painting outdoor scenes on a canvas flat or backdrop fall far short of the desired results. I would suggest that amateur clubs avoid giving plays calling for elaborate exteriors whenever possible.

Backgrounds which are supposed to exist on the other side of a window or beyond a doorway, however, cannot be avoided. It is far simpler and far more effective to merely suggest the surroundings which the audience is supposed to believe are on the other side of the visible setting. Doors opening offstage to another room offer no problem, as one canvas flat properly placed can usually serve to mask the mysteries of backstage from the view of the audience. When the view through a window or through a doorway is supposed to depict a garden or panorama, this problem becomes much more difficult. Windows covered with glass curtains and doors opening off the setting so as to disclose a minimum of background will make the problem considerably easier. A window box outside the

was seated before the picture. Their ability was rewarded by a round of applause from the audience. Although the audience may have been disappointed by the actors, it could hardly be considered as any real reward for the weeks of effort which they had put into rehearsal.

Exterior settings and backdrops scenery are purchased to most small organizations. Usually attempts to achieve realism by painting outdoor scenes on a canvas that or backdrops fall far short of the desired results. I would suggest that amateur clubs avoid this type calling for elaborate exterior whenever possible.

Backdrops which are supposed to exist on the other side of a window or beyond a doorway, however, cannot be avoided. It is far simpler and far more effective to merely suggest the surroundings which the audience is supposed to believe are on the other side of the visible setting. Doors opening offstage to another room offer no problem, as one can easily properly placed can usually serve to mask the existence of backdrops from the view of the audience. When the view through a window or through a doorway is supposed to depict a garden or landscape, this problem becomes much more difficult. Windows covered with glass curtains and doors opening off the setting so as to disclose a minimum of backdrops will make the problem considerably easier. A window box outside the

window with geraniums or evergreens in it, depending on the season represented, can give the impression of a whole garden. A backdrop of light blue properly illuminated and with actual flowers, shrubs, or set pieces representing fences or walls placed immediately in front of it, will prove surprisingly effective. Special effects such as these are individual in nature, and inasmuch as no general method for accomplishing them can be given, their further consideration does not fall within the scope of this book. The answers to such problems must be sought in other publications, such as Glenn R. Webster's Scenery Simplified or Heffner's Modern Theatre Practice.

As a club extends its activities and feels itself increasingly capable of more complicated scenery construction and effects, I know of no more complete book of reference to be used as a guide than Scenery for the Theatre, by Harold Burris-Meyer and Edward C. Cole. This publication is extremely detailed, but explanations are given with great clarity, and all processes are copiously illustrated. It covers the entire field from basic, simple construction to the most complicated stage machinery. In using such a book, the amateur must select the particular ideas which are of interest to him, as much of the book is concerned with items of far too intricate a nature for the majority of amateur organizations.

window with geraniums or evergreens in it, depending on
 the season represented, can give the impression of a whole
 garden. A backdrop of light blue properly illuminated
 and with actual flowers, shrubs, or set pieces represent-
 ing fences or walls placed immediately in front of it,
 will prove surprisingly effective. Special effects such
 as these are individual in nature, and inasmuch as no gen-
 eral method for accomplishing them can be given, their
 further consideration does not fall within the scope of
 this book. The answers to such problems must be sought
 in other publications, such as Glenn R. Webster's Scenery
Simplified or Heltner's Modern Theatre Practice.
 As a club extends its activities and feels itself
 increasingly capable of more complicated scenery construc-
 tion and effects, I know of no more complete book of ref-
 erence to be used as a guide than Scenery for the Theatre,
 by Harold Burris-Meyer and Edward C. Cole. This publica-
 tion is extremely detailed, but explanations are given
 with great clarity, and all processes are copiously illus-
 trated. It covers the entire field from basic simple con-
 struction to the most complicated stage machinery. In
 using such a book, the amateur must select the particular
 ideas which are of interest to him, as much of the book is
 concerned with items of far too intricate a nature for the
 majority of amateur organizations.

To wait until a few days before a play is presented, and then attempt to experiment with actual scenery as soon as it can be set up on the stage to be used, is unsatisfactory and many times a disappointing procedure. The most efficient and inexpensive method of experimentation is by means of a scale model. Such models are very easy and cheap to build. A scale of one inch to one foot is convenient to work with. A board of sufficient size to represent the entire stage floor on the reduced scale should be marked off in one-inch squares. A frame is then attached to one edge of the board representing proportionately the proscenium or stage frame as seen from the audience's point of view. Flats are represented by stiff cardboard or plywood with small blocks fastened to the back of each so they will stand upright without support. Every time the organization acquires a new piece of scenery, it should immediately be duplicated in miniature. The furniture to be used can be represented by blocks of wood which merely occupy a proportionate amount of space to be taken up by the actual furniture. With a model such as this, most of the problems of scene design and space for action can be worked out easily. The director can determine at once from such a set-up whether or not the planned arrangements fit in with his ideas of the way the play is to be acted, and he can accordingly work out essential de-

To wait until a few days before a play is presented, and then attempt to experiment with actual scenery as soon as it can be set up on the stage to be used is unsatisfactory and many times a disappointing procedure. The most efficient and inexpensive method of experimentation is by means of a scale model. Such models are very easy and cheap to build. A scale of one inch to one foot is convenient to work with. A board of sufficient size to represent the entire stage floor on the reduced scale should be marked off in one-inch squares. A frame is then attached to one edge of the board representing proportionately the procession or stage frame as seen from the audience's point of view. Plots are represented by stiff cardboard or plywood with small blocks fastened to the back of each so they will stand upright without support. Every time the organization acquires a new piece of scenery, it should immediately be duplicated in miniature. The miniature to be used can be represented by blocks of wood which merely occupy a proportionate amount of space to be taken up by the actual furniture. With a model such as this, most of the problems of scene design and space for action can be worked out easily. The director can determine at once from such a set-up whether or not the planned arrangements fit in with his ideas of the way the play is to be acted, and he can accordingly work out essential de-

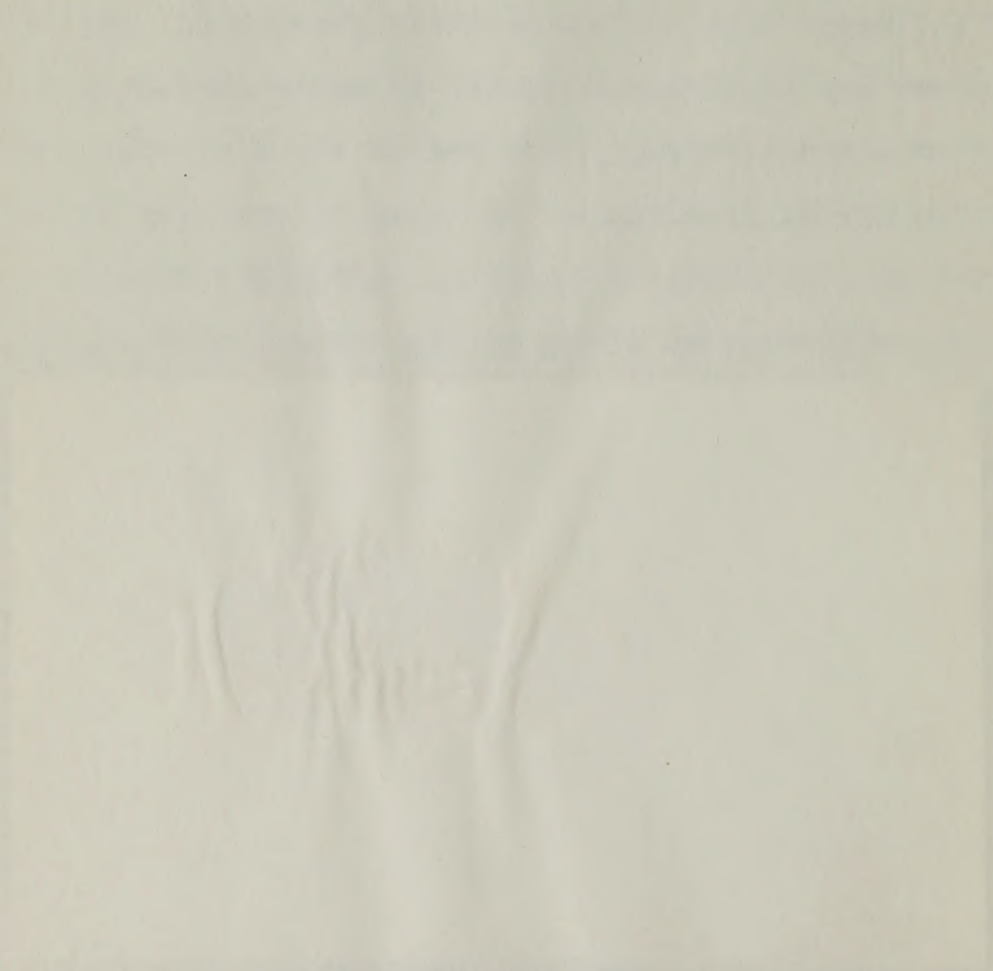
FIGURE 7

A Scale Model of the Setting for Berkeley Square



FIGURE 7

A Scale Model of the Setting for Berkeley Square



tails for the arrangement of properties at his rehearsals.

If sufficient talent is available, the stage model can be made as elaborate as desired, even to the extent of duplicating period furniture, costumes, and stage decoration. In the event that a detailed and complete model is made, it can also be used by the publicity department as a public display prior to the actual production.

If talent and enthusiasm exist in the organization to a sufficient extent to warrant one of these more elaborate stage models, I can highly recommend Leslie Allen Jones's Scenic Design and Model Building. This book is extremely practical, and gives the prospective model builder much useful information as well as a great many convenient methods of making short-cuts and improvisations.

Many books have been written and many complicated diagrams drawn based upon "sight lines." For the amateur, the effort of reading such books and the trouble of drawing such diagrams of his own stage and auditorium are hardly worthwhile. When the stage is set, let the designer seat himself successively in the center of the front row and at either end. Let him repeat this action in the back row, and in the front and back rows of the balcony if there is one. Let him determine in each of these positions, first, if everything on the stage which he wants to be seen can be seen, and second, if everything

tells for the arrangement of properties of his rehearsal.
 If sufficient talent is available, the stage model
 can be made as elaborate as desired, even to the extent of
 depicting period furniture, costumes, and stage decor-
 ation. In the event that a detailed and complete model is
 made, it can also be used by the publicity department as
 a public display prior to the actual production.
 If talent and enthusiasm exist in the organization
 to a sufficient extent to warrant one of these more elab-
 orate stage models, I can highly recommend Leslie Allen
 Jones's Scene Design and Model Building. This book is
 extremely practical, and gives the prospective model build-
 er such useful information as well as a great many con-
 venient methods of making short-cuts and improvisations.
 Many books have been written and many complicated
 diagrams drawn based upon "right lines." For the amateur,
 the effort of reading such books and the trouble of draw-
 ing such diagrams of his own stage and auditorium are
 hardly worthwhile. When the stage is set, let the de-
 signer seat himself successively in the center of the
 front row and at either end. Let him repeat this action
 in the back row, and in the front and back rows of the bal-
 cony if there is one. Let him determine in each of these
 positions, first, if everything on the stage which he
 wants to be seen can be seen, and second, if everything

which he wishes to be concealed is concealed. If both of these can be accomplished by minor changes in the position of the scenery, or by lowering or raising the borders in front of the ceiling, such should be done. If the changes required are too extensive, it may be advisable to eliminate certain seats so that the illusion of the stage will not be spoiled for even a very small number of the audience.

CHAPTER VIII

STAGE LIGHTING

which he wishes to be concealed is concealed. If both of these can be accomplished by minor changes in the position of the scenery, or by lowering or raising the borders in front of the ceiling, such should be done. If the changes required are too extensive, it may be advisable to eliminate certain seats so that the illusion of the stage will not be spoiled for even a very small number of the audience.

CHAPTER VIII

STAGE LIGHTING

Any stage setting, however good, can be spoiled by improper lighting effects. Too many times amateurs are content to stage a play in a hall which may possess one overhead border light and a set of old fashioned footlights without making any attempt to improve on the existing facilities.

The stage electrician himself need have but little knowledge other than CHAPTER VIII of safe electric wiring. He should know how heavy a load his lines can carry lest fuses be inopportunately blown out at inconvenient moments. He should also possess a degree of initiative so that he can light the stage as desired by the director and scene designer without making the source of his light obvious. If theatrical spotlights are available, and there is any possibility of arranging them in the auditorium itself, either fastened to the front of the balcony or on a batton suspended from the ceiling of the auditorium and properly masked, the stage lighting is bound to be much more satisfactory from the point of view of the audience. The closer the source of the light is to the eyes of the persons watching the stage, the better is the effect.

It is very seldom that any setting can be properly

CHAPTER VIII

STAGE LIGHTING

CHAPTER VIII

STAGE LIGHTING

Any stage setting, however good, can be spoiled by improper lighting effects. Too many times amateurs are content to stage a play in a hall which may possess one overhead border light and a set of old fashioned footlights without making any attempt to improve on the existing facilities.

The stage electrician himself need have but little knowledge other than the rudiments of safe electric wiring. He should know how heavy a load his lines can carry lest fuses be inopportunately blown out at inconvenient moments. He should also possess a degree of initiative so that he can light the stage as desired by the director and scene designer without making the source of his light obvious. If theatrical spotlights are available, and there is any possibility of arranging them in the auditorium itself, either fastened to the front of the balcony or on a batten suspended from the ceiling of the auditorium and properly masked, the stage lighting is bound to be much more satisfactory from the point of view of the audience. The closer the source of the light is to the eyes of the persons watching the stage, the better is the effect.

It is very seldom that any setting can be properly

CHAPTER VIII

STAGE LIGHTING

Any stage setting, however good, can be spoiled by improper lighting effects. Too many times amateurs are content to stage a play in a hall which may possess one overhead border light and a set of old fashioned footlights without making any attempt to improve on the existing facilities.

The stage electrician himself need have but little knowledge other than the rudiments of safe electric wiring. He should know how heavy a load his lines can carry lest fuses be inopportunistly blown out at inconvenient moments. He should also possess a degree of initiative so that he can light the stage as desired by the director and scene designer without making the source of his light obvious. If theatrical spotlights are available, and there is any possibility of arranging them in the auditorium itself, either fastened to the front of the balcony or on a battened suspended from the ceiling of the auditorium and properly masked, the stage lighting is bound to be much more satisfactory from the point of view of the audience. The closer the source of the light is to the eyes of the persons watching the stage, the better is the effect. It is very seldom that any setting can be properly

lighted by flooding every corner of the visible portions of the stage with brightness. How often have you been in a room, lighted either by daylight or by artificial light, where the lighting was absolutely even in every corner? To give the impression of reality, the portions of the stage which would normally be brighter because of the apparent source of light, whether it be from a window or from lamps or other lighting fixtures, should receive a greater concentration of illumination.

All directors will designate certain sections of the stage area as spots where high points in the action of the play occur. In these places also an increase in the intensity of the illumination will serve to highlight the action.

Footlights, for the most part, throw queer shadows on actors' faces and on the background of the set. It is many times advisable to eliminate their use entirely. Spotlights suspended immediately in front of the ceiling, concealed by a border, and spotlights placed on either side of the front of the stage, concealed by a flat with a narrow hinged section (commonly called a tormentor), together with the spotlights previously mentioned which have been placed in the auditorium proper, should be ample to give adequate light to almost any interior setting.

Stage lighting equipment is at best expensive.

lighted by flooding every corner of the visible portions of the stage with brightness. How often have you been in a room, lighted either by daylight or by artificial light, where the lighting was absolutely even in every corner? To give the impression of reality, the portions of the stage which would normally be brighter because of the apparent source of light, whether it be from a window or from lamps or other lighting fixtures, should receive a greater concentration of illumination.

All directors will designate certain sections of the stage area as spots where high points in the action of the play occur. In these places also an increase in the intensity of the illumination will serve to highlight the action.

Footlights, for the most part, throw deep shadows on actors' faces and on the background of the set. It is many times advisable to eliminate their use entirely. Spotlights suspended immediately in front of the ceiling, concealed by a border, and spotlights placed on either side of the front of the stage, concealed by a list with a narrow hinged section (commonly called a tormentor), together with the spotlights previously mentioned which have been placed in the auditorium proper, should be ample to give adequate light to almost any interior setting. Stage lighting equipment is at best expensive.

The acquisition of a few baby spotlights with good lenses and gadgets for adjusting the width of the beam is a worthwhile investment for any organization as soon as it can afford it. Until such time, funnel-shaped bulbs, which are made largely for merchants' display windows, and are available at a cost of about seventy-five cents apiece, make a fairly adequate substitute. Colored glass filters and frames to hold them to the bulbs are also available at a moderate cost. The greatest difficulty with these bulbs is the escaping light around the edges of the area on which the light concentration is desired. This difficulty can be eliminated, however, by masking the bulbs with pieces of flexible asbestos paper.

Background lighting is a difficult subject to generalize upon. Many times amateurs give it far too little thought. On one occasion, when I was staging Murray Hill, I utilized a backstage spotlight of far greater intensity than the stage lighting. This shone through a window across the breakfast table, thus effectively giving the impression of bright, early morning sunshine. On another occasion, when I was staging The Play's the Thing, the background beyond the French doors at the rear of the set was supposed to be blue sky above the Mediterranean. The stage was so shallow that it was necessary to hang the backdrop, representing the sky, within two feet of the

The acquisition of a few baby spotlights with good lenses and sockets for adjusting the width of the beam is a worthwhile investment for any organization as soon as it can afford it. Until such time, funnel-shaped bulbs, which are made largely for merchants' display windows, and are available at a cost of about seventy-five cents apiece, make a fairly adequate substitute. Colored glass filters and frames to hold them to the bulbs are also available at a moderate cost. The greatest difficulty with these bulbs is the escaping light around the edges of the area on which the light concentration is desired. This difficulty can be eliminated, however, by masking the bulbs with pieces of flexible asbestos paper.

Backround lighting is a difficult subject to analyze upon. Many times amateurs give it far too little thought. On one occasion, when I was staging Murder Will Out, I utilized a backstage spotlight of far greater intensity than the stage lighting. This shone through a window across the breakfast table, thus effectively giving the impression of bright early morning sunshine. On another occasion, when I was staging The Fly's the Thing, the back-ground beyond the French doors at the rear of the set was supposed to be blue sky above the Mediterranean. The stage was so shallow that it was necessary to hang the backdrop, representing the sky, within two feet of the

French doors. All sorts of expedients were tried to prevent this backdrop from looking like exactly what it was. Finally it was moved almost a foot nearer the set with a bright blue light placed on the floor behind it shining up against the curtain. This, strangely enough, gave exactly the desired result. Therefore, the best method I can suggest for achieving adequate background lighting is experimentation. Try everything, and sooner or later something will be found that will suit the purpose.

For the individual who wishes to investigate more carefully an approach to good stage lighting, Stanley McCandless's A Method of Lighting the Stage gives a complete handling of the subject. It fails, however, to interpret his method in terms of the limited equipment in the possession of most small organizations. Theoretically his book is so sound, practical and clearly stated that anyone who can adapt his ideas to the means he has at hand can gain much from it. The book is particularly helpful in the portions devoted to the lighting of background surfaces and the creating of special effects.

After the stage lights have been arranged to suit all concerned, the real work of the stage electrician begins. He must provide himself with a cue sheet which indicates precisely how his switchboard is to be manipulated during the action of the play. He should mark his switches

French doors. All sorts of expedients were tried to prevent this backdrop from looking like exactly what it was. Finally it was moved almost a foot nearer the set with a bright line light placed on the floor behind it shining up against the curtain. This, strangely enough, gave exactly the desired result. Therefore, the best method I can suggest for achieving adequate backround lighting is experimentation. Try everything, and sooner or later something will be found that will suit the purpose.

For the individual who wishes to investigate more carefully an approach to good stage lighting, Stanley McCandless's A Method of Lighting the Stage gives a complete handling of the subject. It fails, however, to interpret his method in terms of the limited equipment in the possession of most small organizations. Theoretically his book is so sound, practical and clearly stated that anyone who can adapt his ideas to the means he has at hand can gain much from it. The book is particularly helpful in the portions devoted to the lighting of backround surfaces and the creation of special effects.

After the stage lights have been arranged to suit all concerned, the real work of the stage electrician begins. He must provide himself with a cue sheet which indicates precisely how his switchboard is to be manipulated during the action of the play. He should mark his switches

FIGURE 8

A Stage Setting for The Play's the Thing



(Illustrating novel arrangement of entrances facilitating presentation on a shallow stage, but giving variety from the usual setting of three flat walls.)

FIGURE 2

A Stage Setting for The Day's the Fight

(Illustrating novel arrangement of entrance facilitating presentation on a shallow stage, but giving variety from the usual setting of three flat walls.)

on the board with tags or with chalk to indicate exactly what they control. He must be alert at all times so that his light changes occur naturally and at the exact instant required. Most audiences can become highly amused when the stage lights go out as the actor is in the process of reaching for the wall switch which is supposed to control them. If, on such an occasion, the actor is allowed to get his hand on the switch and knows enough to keep it there until the lights actually go out, such an interruption to the action can be avoided.

The only true test of whether or not the illumination is proper is the test of common sense. A lighting and scenery rehearsal should always be held without the presence of any actors whatever on the stage. Stage hands, or indeed anyone, can be used as stand-ins so that the director can determine whether his actors will be able to be seen to good advantage in whatever positions he desires.

The lighting for the setting and the lighting for the actors are two entirely separate considerations. It is virtually impossible to plan the details of either in advance of the time when the scenery is arranged for the final presentation of the play. I have always found it more successful to work out first the illumination for the scenery itself. Flat scenery will always look quite different from what was expected under colored stage

on the board with keys or with click to indicate exactly what they control. He must be alert at all times so that his light changes occur naturally and at the exact instant required. Most audiences can become highly amused when the stage lights go out as the actor is in the process of reaching for the wall switch which is supposed to control them. If, on such an occasion, the actor is allowed to get his hand on the switch and knows enough to keep it there until the lights actually go out, such an interruption to the action can be avoided.

The only true test of whether or not the illumination is proper is the test of common sense. A lighting and scenery rehearsal should always be held without the presence of any actors whatever on the stage. Stage hands, or indeed anyone, can be used as stand-ins so that the director can determine whether his actors will be able to be seen to good advantage in whatever positions he desires. The lighting for the setting and the lighting for the actors are two entirely separate considerations. It is virtually impossible to plan the details of either in advance of the time when the scenery is arranged for the final presentation of the play. I have always found it more successful to work out first the illumination for the scenery itself. That scenery will always look quite different from what was expected under colored stage

lighting. Much experimentation in the intensity as well as in the color of the illumination may be necessary to achieve the results desired.

If a two-toned painting operation has been accomplished by means of a spatter or stipple on the scenery, as described in Chapter VII, the basic color of the lighting used in successive scenes can be varied in order to alter the color of the setting itself. This might be accomplished by using a large amount of amber light in one scene, and then eliminating the amber and substituting blue light for it in another scene.

When the lighting has been decided upon to the satisfaction of the stage designer, the next step is to introduce whatever additional effects are required to show off the actors to their best advantage. When this step has been accomplished, it is almost inevitable that the basic lighting which has satisfied the scene designer will have been altered. At this point, it is merely a question of further experimentation until, as a result of some sort of compromise, all parties are satisfied. It must be borne in mind that it is far more vital for the actors to be seen than for the artistry of the scenery to be illuminated. Above all else, it must be remembered that this experimentation should be finished prior to the dress rehearsal so that there will never be any necessity

lighting. Much experimentation in the intensity as well as in the color of the illumination may be necessary to achieve the results desired.

If a two-toned lighting operation has been accomplished by means of a spatter or studio or the scenery, as described in Chapter VII, the basic color of the lighting used in successive scenes can be varied in order to alter the color of the setting itself. This might be accomplished by using a large amount of amber light in one scene, and then illuminating the same and other things with blue light for it is another scene.

When the lighting has been changed upon to the satisfaction of the stage designer, the next step is to introduce whatever additional effects are required to show off the actors to their best advantage. When this step has been accomplished, it is almost inevitable that the basic lighting which has satisfied the scene designer will have been altered. At this point, it is rarely a question of further experimentation until, as a result of some sort of compromise, all parties are satisfied. It must be borne in mind that it is far more vital for the actors to be seen than for the artistry of the scenery to be illuminated. Above all else, it must be remembered that this experimentation should be finished prior to the dress rehearsal so that there will never be any necessity

of stopping that preliminary performance in order to make alterations in the lighting.

CHAPTER IX

THE PROPERTY MANAGER

of stopping that preliminary performance in order to make
alterations in the lighting.

CHAPTER IX

THE PROPERTY MANAGER

In the professional theatre, hampered as it is by the presence of the stage hands' union (The International Alliance of Theatrical and Stage Employees), definite distinctions have been made defining what constitutes stage properties. The union property man must not lay a finger on anything which does not belong in his department, and the union scene shifter must not touch anything which is not defined as scenery. Such careful differentiation is foolish. Stage properties can be generally identified as all movable items, either utilitarian or decorative, which appear on the set.

CHAPTER IX

THE PROPERTY MANAGER

The property manager should provide himself with a list of all properties to be used and, in an amateur group, his biggest job is the securing of such items. Many properties can be borrowed from local sources. It is, of course, well to have them look as authentic as possible, but it is a risky procedure to secure on a loan basis such things as valuable, fragile antiques. Unusual requirements in many plays call for the use of ingenuity on the part of the property manager. In Berkeley Square, for instance, much of the play hinges about the similarity in appearance between the deadening man and a portrait of one of his unces-

CHAPTER IX

THE PROPERTY MANAGER

ters. When I stayed CHAPTER IX
local art teacher, who was a member of the dramatic club,
THE PROPERTY MANAGER

credit. In the professional theatre, hampered as it is by the presence of the stage hands' union (The International Alliance of Theatrical and Stage Employees), definite distinctions have been made defining what constitutes stage properties. The union property man must not lay a finger on anything which does not belong in his department, and the union scene shifter must not touch anything which is not defined as scenery. For amateurs such careful differentiation is foolish. Stage properties can be generally identified as all moveable items, either utilitarian or decorative, which appear on the set.

The property manager should provide himself with a list of all properties to be used and, in an amateur group, his biggest job is the securing of such items. Many properties can be borrowed from local sources. It is, of course, well to have them look as authentic as possible, but it is a risky procedure to secure on a loan basis such things as valuable, fragile antiques. Unusual requirements in many plays call for the use of ingenuity on the part of the property manager. In Berkeley Square, for instance, much of the play hinges about the similarity in appearance between the leading man and a portrait of one of his ances-

CHAPTER IX

THE PROPERTY MANAGER

In the professional theatre, hampered as it is by the presence of the stage hands' union (The International Alliance of Theatrical and Stage Employees), definite distinctions have been made defining what constitutes stage properties. The union property man must not lay a finger on anything which does not belong in his department, and the union scene shifter must not touch anything which is not defined as scenery. For amateurs such careful distinction is foolish. Stage properties can be generally identified as all movable items, either utilitarian or decorative, which appear on the set.

The property manager should provide himself with a list of all properties to be used and, in an amateur group, his biggest job is the securing of such items. Many properties can be borrowed from local sources. It is, of course, well to have them look as authentic as possible, but it is a risky procedure to secure on a loan basis such things as valuable, fragile antiques. Unusual requirements in many plays call for the use of ingenuity on the part of the property manager. In Berkeley Square, for instance, much of the play hinges about the similarity in appearance between the leading man and a portrait of one of his ances-

tors. When I staged this production several years ago, a local art teacher, who was a member of the dramatic club, was asked to assist with this problem, and produced a very creditable oil painting, the model for which was the leading man whom it was supposed to resemble. The similarity was so striking that a very large portion of the audience commented on it, and the entire dramatic effect of the play was enhanced. The same play calls for a crux ansata to be featured prominently. Only one person could be found who had ever seen one, and no one could locate any replica of this item. However, one of the club members, who possessed a jig saw, reproduced this unique type of cross from a drawing made by our one authority on the subject.

When the property manager has succeeded in borrowing, improvising, or making all his properties, and when he has satisfied the director, the producer, and the actors with his choices, all that remains for him to do is to arrange for their transportation to the auditorium at the proper time, and to spend sleepless days and nights worrying about the things he has secured on a loan basis until they are returned in good order to their rightful owners. Of course during the play itself, he must keep a check against his property list to determine that all items are in their proper places at the beginning of each act, and

When I started this production several years ago, a local art teacher, who was a member of the dramatic club, was asked to assist with this problem, and produced a very creditable oil painting, the model for which was the lead- ing man whom it was supposed to resemble. The similarity was so striking that a very large portion of the audience commented on it, and the entire dramatic effect of the play was enhanced. The same play calls for a cross anast to be featured prominently. Only one person could be found who had ever seen one, and no one could locate any replicas of this item. However, one of the club members, who possessed a life size, reproduced this unique type of cross from a drawing made by our one authority on the subject.

When the property manager has succeeded in borrowing, improving, or making all his properties, and when he has satisfied the director, the producer, and the actors with his choices, all that remains for him to do is to arrange for their transportation to the auditorium at the proper time, and to spend sleepless days and nights worrying about the things he has secured on a loan basis until they are returned in good order to their rightful owners. Of course during the play itself, he must keep a check against his property list to determine that all items are in their proper places at the beginning of each act, and

FIGURE 9

SAMPLE PROPERTY LIST

B. J. ONE

ACT I

2 Desks

4 desk chairs

1 table

1 bulletin board

1 map of North Sea--large to go on wall

On table--tray with teapot--4 cups--saucers--lemon--
sugar--milk--files of reports--a couple of spikes
to stick papers on--a few charts--2 colored arrows
--thumb tacks of three different colors.

On desks--couple of wire baskets--numerous papers--let-
ters opened and unopened--blotters--ink--pens--
1 phone on each desk--2 reference books.

For messenger--1 large envelope with 2 letters enclosed--
3 other messages.

1 stepladder

FIGURE 2

SAMPLE PROPERTY LIST

B. J. ONE

ACT I

2 desks

4 desk chairs

1 table

1 bulletin board

1 map of North Sea--large to go on wall

On table--tray with teapot--4 cups--sawyers--lamin--
 sugar--milk--files of reports--a couple of books
 to stick papers on--a few charts--3 colored arrows
 --thumb tacks of three different colors.

On desks--couple of wire baskets--numerous papers--let-
 ters opened and unopened--dictators--ink--pens--
 1 phone on each desk--3 reference books.

For messenger--1 large envelope with 2 letters enclosed--
 3 other messages.

1 stenographer

that any properties which are moved onto the stage by the actors during the course of the play are prepared and ready and handed to the proper actor at the correct moment. A typical property check list is illustrated in Figure 9.

In plays where meals have to be served on stage, the property manager's life becomes particularly hectic. He must not only procure the proper items, but make sure that they are in condition to be served at just the right moment. One group staging The Play's the Thing was threatened with the complete failure of the play because the property man had not had sufficient foresight to secure a ripe peach. A member of the club made a rush trip by automobile of over two hundred miles during the few hours before the play was to go on and thus saved the day.

It is well to ascertain that the property manager has no propensity for playing practical jokes. I once participated in some scenes from the second part of Henry the Fourth where real wine was substituted for the grape juice that Falstaff was supposed to imbibe. As a result, by the time the scenes were finished, Falstaff was practically staggering about the stage. Luckily he remembered his lines, and his performance was acclaimed by the critics as little short of great. However, such attempts at realism are to be frowned upon.

One other responsibility of the person in charge

that any properties which are moved onto the stage by the actors during the course of the play are prepared and ready and handed to the proper actor at the correct moment. A typical property check list is illustrated in Figure 9. In plays where meals have to be served on stage, the property manager's life becomes particularly hectic. He must not only procure the proper items, but make sure that they are in condition to be served at just the right moment. One group starring The Play's the Thing was threatened with the complete failure of the play because the property man had not had sufficient foresight to secure a ripe peach. A member of the club made a rush trip by automobile of over two hundred miles during the few hours before the play was to go on and thus saved the day. It is well to ascertain that the property manager has no propensity for playing practical jokes. I once participated in some scenes from the second part of Henry the Fourth where real wine was substituted for the wine twice that Falstaff was supposed to imbibe. As a result, by the time the scenes were finished, Falstaff was practically staggering about the stage. Luckily he remembered his lines, and his performance was acclaimed by the critics as little short of great. However, such attempts at realism are to be frowned upon.

One other responsibility of the person in charge

of properties is the procurement and operation of all sound effects. This may be accomplished in one of two ways. Either apparatus may be made for the purpose of simulating the required noises, or phonograph records and a reproducer may be used. Such items as gunshots, horses' hoofs, gongs, cash registers, or breaking china, offer but simple problems to the construction-minded property man. In Scenery for the Little Theatre, on pages 412 to 416, there is an excellent list of stage machinery which can be constructed easily for the making of many sound effects. However, when the play requirements call for traffic noise, calliopes, fife and drum corps, newspaper printing presses, fire apparatus, the noise of surf or trains, the problem becomes much more difficult, and it is far easier to consult a catalog of some convenient theatrical supply house in the hope that a record of the required effect may be available. In these days, virtually everything which might be needed for stage sound effects has been recorded, and it is a comparatively easy matter to borrow an electric phonograph with good tone and volume control. It must be kept in mind that a crowded auditorium will tend to deaden sounds from backstage and in all probability increased volume will be required for the actual performance.

A special cue sheet must be maintained in order to insure the proper execution of the necessary sound effects

of properties is the procurement and operation of all sound effects. This may be accomplished in one of two ways. Either apparatus may be made for the purpose of stimulating the required noises, or phonograph records and a reproducer may be used. Such items as fireworks, horns, bells, gongs, cash registers, or breaking china, offer but slight problems to the constitution-minded property man.

In Scenery for the Little Theatre, on pages 412 to 416, there is an excellent list of stage machinery which can be constructed easily for the making of many sound effects. However, when the play requirements call for traffic noise, calliopes, life and drum corps, newspaper printing presses, fire apparatus, the noise of surf or trains, the problem becomes much more difficult, and it is far easier to consult a catalog of some convenient theatrical supply house in the hope that a record of the required effect may be available. In these days, virtually everything which might be needed for stage sound effects has been recorded, and it is a comparatively easy matter to borrow an electric phonograph with good tone and volume control. It must be kept in mind that a crowded auditorium will tend to deaden sounds from backstage and in all probability increased volume will be required for the actual performance.

A special cue sheet must be maintained in order to insure the proper execution of the necessary sound effects

FIGURE 10

A PORTION OF THE LIGHT AND SOUND EFFECTS

CUE SHEET

B. J. ONE

ACT II, SCENE I

LIGHTS--opens--no lights except shaded flashlight on
Quartermaster--before dialogue begins also shaded
flashlight on Navigator

SOUND--continuous throughout act--swish of water on the
bow--throb of machinery--loose signal halyard slap-
ping against mast

P-2--4 CURTAIN--NO LIGHTS

P-2-15 Exit Sub., warn for searchlight

P-2-16 "The starboard torpedo has had its igniters renewed,
sir. The tube is ready for action, sir."
Thin shaft of light from stage R. appears--wavers--
disappears

P-2-17 "It's about four miles away." Distant booming

P-2-17 "I didn't see it, sir."
"About green 75, sir." Light appears again

P-2-17 "She's hit."
"Blown up." Dull red glare on stage R. horizon--
searchlight goes off

P-2-19 "You think the attack was four miles away?"
"At least." Searchlight appears again

P-2-19 "By gosh she's pressing home her attack." Cascade
of star shells rise and fall above the horizon stage
R. well back

P-2-19 "Star shell on the starboard quarter."
"Log that, chief yeoman." A heavy dull boom. Dull
red glare on horizon stage R brighter than first red

FIGURE 10

A PORTION OF THE LIGHT AND SOUND EFFECTS

CUE SHEET

E. J. ONE

ACT II, SCENE I

LIGHTS--opens--no lights except shaded flashlight on
 Quartermaster--before dialogue begins also shaded
 flashlight on Navigator

SOUND--continuous throughout act--swish of water on the
 bow--trump of machinery--score signal halves stop-
 ping against mast

P-2-4 CURTAIN--NO LIGHTS

P-2-15 Exit Sub., warn for searchlight

P-2-16 "The starboard torpedo has had its lanterns renewed,
 sir. The tube is ready for action, sir."
 Thin shaft of light from starboard E. appears--
 disappears

P-2-17 "It's about four miles away." Distant booming

P-2-17 "I didn't see it, sir."
 "About seven 75, sir." Light appears again

P-2-17 "She's hit."
 "Blown up." Full red flare on starboard E. portace--
 searchlight goes off

P-2-18 "You think the attack was four miles away?"
 "At least." Searchlight appears again

P-2-18 "By God she's pressing home her attack." Casade
 of star shells rise and fall above the horizon where
 E. well back

P-2-18 "Star shell on the starboard quarter."
 "Yes that, chief yeoman." A heavy gull boom. Full
 red flare on horizon where E. brighter than first red

Frequently this cue sheet must combine directions for the stage electrician as well as the property man. It is difficult in an amateur production which is given on only one or two occasions to determine the exact timing for such a sheet. The simplest and most effective substitute is to note the act and page number as well as the spoken line where each cue occurs. Frequent comparison of the cue sheet with the prompter's script should give ample warning to the persons responsible for manipulating the necessary switches or machinery. Figure 10 shows a cue sheet from one of the scenes of B. J. One. The action on the stage takes place on the bridge of a battleship at the beginning of the Battle of Jutland, and the effects called for are probably more difficult and complicated than most amateurs should attempt.

It is obvious that the responsibilities of the property manager vary greatly with different plays, but he is always of great importance in preparing for the play and frequently his work is vital to the continuing action of the presentation itself.

Frequently this cue sheet must combine directions for the stage electrician as well as the property man. It is difficult in an amateur production which is given on only one or two occasions to determine the exact timing for such a sheet. The simplest and most effective substitute is to note the act and page number as well as the spoken line where each cue occurs. Frequent comparison of the cue sheet with the prompter's script should give ample warning to the persons responsible for manipulating the necessary switches or machinery. Figure 10 shows a cue sheet from one of the scenes of B. J. One. The action on the stage takes place on the bridge of a battleship at the beginning of the Battle of Jutland, and the effects called for are probably more difficult and complicated than most amateurs should attempt.

It is obvious that the responsibilities of the property manager vary greatly with different plays, but he is always of great importance in preparing for the play and frequently his work is vital to the continuing action of the presentation itself.

CHAPTER X

THE STAGE MANAGER AND MINOR FUNCTIONARIES

The next group to be considered to round out the picture of the production of an actual play is composed of those who function very largely behind the scenes. The first of these is the stage manager, who takes over complete control of backstage and all adjacent areas, other than the auditorium, from the time of the dress rehearsal onward. In many clubs this person is identical with the scene designer, but as a stage manager, he has many entirely different functions. The electrician and the property manager are both responsible to him, as are the other minor functionaries who work backstage, such as those in charge of costumes, makeup, the prompter, the stage hands, and the call boy.

CHAPTER X

THE STAGE MANAGER AND MINOR FUNCTIONARIES

Not much general information can be given to guide the chairman of the costume committee. She, for usually this job is best filled by a woman, is of course in charge of any rented costumes and is entirely responsible for all aspects of such a transaction from the original arrangements to the proper return of such things to the costumer. In addition, she must check on the colors of all clothing worn by any of the actors, particularly in order to avoid unfortunate clashes of color between the dresses of any of

CHAPTER X

THE STAGE MANAGER AND MINOR FUNCTIONARIES

CHAPTER X

THE STAGE MANAGER AND MINOR FUNCTIONARIES

The next group to be considered to round out the picture of the production of an actual play is composed of those who function very largely behind the scenes. The first of these is the stage manager, who takes over complete control of backstage and all adjacent areas, other than the auditorium, from the time of the dress rehearsal onward. In many clubs this person is identical with the scene designer, but as stage manager, he has many entirely different functions. The electrician and the property manager are both responsible to him, as are the other minor functionaries who work backstage, such as those in charge of costumes, makeup, the prompter, the stage hands, and the call boy.

Not much general information can be given to guide the chairman of the costume committee. She, for usually this job is best filled by a woman, is of course in charge of any rented costumes and is entirely responsible for all aspects of such a transaction from the original arrangements to the proper return of such things to the costumer. In addition, she must check on the colors of all clothing worn by any of the actors, particularly in order to avoid unfortunate clashes of color between the dresses of any of

CHAPTER X

THE STAGE MANAGER AND MINOR FUNCTIONARIES

The next group to be considered to round out the picture of the production of an actual play is composed of those who function very largely behind the scenes. The first of these is the stage manager, who takes over complete control of backstage and all adjacent areas, other than the auditorium, from the time of the dress rehearsal onward. In many cases this person is identical with the scene designer, but as stage manager, he has many entirely different functions. The electrician and the property manager are both responsible to him, as are the other minor functionaries who work backstage, such as those in charge of costumes, makeup, the prompter, the stage hands, and the call boy.

Not much general information can be given to guide the chairman of the costume committee. She, for usually this job is best filled by a woman, is of course in charge of any rented costumes and is entirely responsible for all aspects of such a transaction from the original arrangements to the proper return of such things to the costumer. In addition, she must check on the colors of all clothing worn by any of the actors, particularly in order to avoid unfortunate clashes of color between the dresses of any of

the actresses, and she must also make sure that such dresses blend with the general color scheme of the setting and properties. She should be equipped with a needle and thread ready to come to the rescue in case of any emergency.

The duties of the person in charge of makeup are obvious. In every group someone is available who knows a sufficient amount about stage makeup to make sure that the club has the proper materials on hand to take care of all necessities. All actors and actresses should be made to appear on the stage under varying lighting conditions immediately prior to the dress rehearsal so that the director and producer may suggest any changes which seem necessary. Most amateurs have the idea that although they are appearing on a small stage before only a couple of hundred people, their makeup should be sufficiently heavy to allow them to be seen to advantage in the last row of the balcony of Radio City Music Hall. On one occasion when I was staging a musical show for a high school, the professional makeup artist who had been hired failed at the last moment to show up. I found myself faced with the necessity of doing the makeup on thirty young chorus girls in approximately as many minutes. Needless to say, I could not do a very thorough job on any of them. I took care of all of them, and almost every one complained of the lightness of the makeup applied. Even I felt that I was not doing an ade-

the actresses, and she must also make sure that such dresses blend with the general color scheme of the setting and properties. She should be equipped with a needle and thread ready to come to the rescue in case of any emergency.

The duties of the person in charge of makeup are ob-

vious. In every group someone is available who knows a sufficient amount about stage makeup to make sure that the club has the proper materials on hand to take care of all necessities. All actors and actresses should be made to appear on the stage under varying lighting conditions immediately prior to the dress rehearsal so that the director and producer may suggest any changes which seem necessary. Most amateurs have the idea that although they are appearing on a small stage before only a couple of hundred people, their makeup should be sufficiently heavy to allow them to

be seen to advantage in the last row of the balcony of Radio City Music Hall. On one occasion when I was staging a musical show for a high school, the professional makeup artist who had been hired failed at the last moment to show up. I found myself faced with the necessity of doing the

makeup on thirty young chorus girls in approximately as

many minutes. Needless to say, I could not do a very thorough job on any of them. I took care of all of them, and almost every one complained of the lightness of the makeup applied. Even I felt that I was not doing an ade-

quate job, but the limited time permitted no further effort. During the first chorus number, I went around to the front of the house to observe the results of my artistic efforts and was most pleasantly surprised at the effect that I had achieved just because of press of circumstances. From that time on, I have been thoroughly convinced that there is but small possibility of getting too little makeup on an amateur actor on a small stage.

The job of prompter is without doubt the most boring and uninteresting position in any play production. The person who finds himself seated at every rehearsal with his eyes glued to a play book, never speaking unless someone makes an error, and feeling like an intruder every time he must make some verbal contribution to the action, is indeed a martyr. Yet no amateur production can proceed without the services of some willing workhorse in this capacity. During the actual presentation of the play, the prompter is the pulse of all backstage activity. He must warn the stage manager, the electrician, the property man, actors awaiting their cue for entrance, in short, everyone who has some offstage function to perform at any time during the action. In addition, he must be constantly alert to what is happening on the stage so that at the first sign of stumbling on the part of any of the actors, he is ready to assist them and get them back on the right track. The

quite job, but the limited time permitted no further effort. During the first chorus number, I went around to the front of the house to observe the results of my artistic efforts and was most pleasantly surprised at the effect that I had achieved just because of press of circumstances. From that time on, I have been thoroughly convinced that there is but small possibility of getting too little making an amateur actor on a small stage.

The job of prompter is without doubt the most boring and uninteresting position in any play production. The person who finds himself seated at every rehearsal with his eyes glued to a play book, never speaking unless someone makes an error, and feeling like an intruder every time he must make some verbal contribution to the action, is indeed a martyr. Yet no amateur production can proceed without the services of some willing workhorse in this capacity. During the actual presentation of the play, the prompter is the pulse of all backstage activity. He must warn the stage manager, the electrician, the property man, actors awaiting their cue for entrance, in short, everyone who has some backstage function to perform at any time during the action. In addition, he must be constantly alert to what is happening on the stage so that at the first sign of stumbling on the part of any of the actors, he is ready to assist them and get them back on the right track. The

prompter is the stage manager's right-hand man. He accomplishes the drudgery which permits the stage manager to keep everyone else on his toes backstage.

The stage hands are appointed primarily to assist the stage manager. They should be as few in number as possible and each should be thoroughly acquainted with whatever functions he has to perform.

The call boy, who is only a very minor figure in the backstage picture, must make the rounds of all the dressing rooms prior to the beginning of each act and announce exactly how long it will be before the curtain goes up. He usually informs the actors at five minutes and at one minute before curtain time, and before the beginning of the play, at thirty minutes and at fifteen minutes as well. In addition, he must make certain that any actor who is not on stage at the beginning of an act, but who makes his entrance later, is at the proper place at the right time.

Every stage manager will find, as the time of the actual performance approaches, that there will be much enthusiasm among club members, who have not done much in the way of work during the rehearsal period, to make up for their laxity by volunteering to help out backstage during the actual presentation. If he accepts all offers, he will have so many people backstage that everyone will be confused. He must rule his domain with a firm hand, and keep

everybody from the sacred precincts behind the scenes except those who have actual business there. During the interval between acts, particularly if there is any extensive shifting of scenery or changing of properties to be done, he should forbid the presence of even the actors themselves until all necessary arrangements are made, at which time they will be summoned to take their places for the next act.

CHAPTER XI

THE BUSINESS MANAGER

CHAPTER XI

THE BUSINESS MANAGER

The lot of the business manager for an amateur production is not a happy one, but strangely enough, in every community there is always someone who is delighted to have this job. Poor business management of just one play can give any dramatic club a poor reputation permanently. The producer and business manager should confer frequently and if advance plans are carefully enough made, and steps are taken to make certain that none of the department heads exceed the allotments which they have been promised, the job should be a fair one.

CHAPTER XI

THE BUSINESS MANAGER

As stated in a previous chapter that a safe limit for the expenses of any production should be approximately one half of the estimated gross receipts.

The smart business manager will see to it that several subcommittee heads are appointed to assist him with his work. He may have a ticket committee, program committee, advertising committee, sales committee and a head usher. The primary responsibility of the ticket committee is to arrange for the tickets to be properly printed and, in the event that reserve seats are to be sold, it is essential that every ticket be checked against its actual seat or against a detailed seating plan of the auditorium.

CHAPTER XI

THE BUSINESS MANAGER

CHAPTER XI

THE BUSINESS MANAGER

The lot of the business manager for an amateur production is not a happy one, but strangely enough, in every community there is always someone who is delighted to have this job. Poor business management of just one play can give any dramatic club a poor reputation permanently. The producer and business manager should confer frequently and if advance plans are carefully enough made, and steps are taken to make certain that none of the department heads exceed the allotments which they have been promised, the job should be a fairly simple one. I suggested in a previous chapter that a safe limit for the expenses of any production should be approximately one half of the estimated gross receipts. The smart business manager will see to it that several subcommittee heads are appointed to assist him with his work. He may have a ticket committee, program committee, advertising committee, sales committee and a head usher. The primary responsibility of the ticket committee is to arrange for the tickets to be properly printed and, in the event that reserve seats are to be sold, it is essential that every ticket be checked against its actual seat or against a detailed seating plan of the auditorium.

CHAPTER XI

THE BUSINESS MANAGER

The lot of the business manager for an amateur production is not a happy one, but strenuously enough, in every community there is always someone who is delighted to have this job. Poor business management of just one play can give any dramatic club a poor reputation permanently. The producer and business manager should confer frequently and if advance plans are carefully enough made, and steps are taken to make certain that none of the department heads need the allocations which they have been promised, the job should be a fairly simple one. I suggested in a previous chapter that a safe limit for the expenses of any production should be approximately one half of the estimated gross receipts.

The smart business manager will see to it that several subcommittee heads are appointed to assist him with his work. He may have a ticket committee, program committee, advertising committee, sales committee and a head usher. The primary responsibility of the ticket committee is to arrange for the tickets to be properly printed and, in the event that reserve seats are to be sold, it is essential that every ticket be checked against its actual seat or against a detailed seating plan of the auditorium.

If the play is to be presented on more than one evening, different colored stock should be used for each performance. Very careful records must be kept of all tickets issued to agents on consignment, and a safe deadline must be made for the return of all unsold tickets lest some well-meaning club member show up several days after the play has been given with a block of unsold seats which might easily have been disposed of at the box office at the time of the performance.

The program committee is, of course, responsible for the printing of the programs. Absolute accuracy is essential in this job. There is nothing which wounds an amateur dramatic artist to the extent of having his name misspelled. The program committee chairman must check carefully with other committee chairman to make certain of the appearance in the program of the names of all who have contributed in any way to the production. Many small dramatic clubs go a step further and print on the last page of their programs a complete list of all members of the organization. Most Americans, whether they will admit it or not, love to see their names in print, and to cater to this weakness is a cheap way of retaining good will. Some organizations make a practice of selling advertising for their play programs. It is my belief that this method of increasing revenue is, to say the least, unethical. Merchants approached by

If the play is to be presented on more than one evening, different colored stock should be used for each performance. Very careful records must be kept of all tickets issued to agents on consignment, and a safe deadline must be made for the return of all unsold tickets lest some well-meaning club member show up several days after the play has been given with a block of unsold seats which might easily have been disposed of at the box office at the time of the performance.

The program committee is, of course, responsible for the printing of the program. Absolute accuracy is essential in this job. There is nothing which wounds an amateur dramatic artist to the extent of having his name misspelled. The program committee chairman must check carefully with other committee chairman to make certain of the appearance in the program of the names of all who have contributed in any way to the production. Many small dramatic clubs go a step further and print on the last page of their programs a complete list of all members of the organization. Most Americans, whether they will admit it or not, love to see their names in print, and to cater to this weakness is a cheap way of retaining good will. Some organizations make a practice of selling advertising for their play programs. It is my belief that this method of increasing revenue is, to say the least, unethical. Merchants approached by

FIGURE 11

Example of Typical Programs

THE EXETER PLAYERS**PRESENT****NIGHT OF JANUARY 16TH****A COMEDY-DRAMA IN THREE ACTS****BY****AYN RAND**

Proceeds for the Benefit of
Exeter Chapter, American Red Cross

DECEMBER 4 and 5, 1941

CLUB MEMBERS

Mr. Jackson B. Adkins
 Mr. Earl A. Barrett
 Mr. Robert H. Bates
 Mr. Gordon Benn
 Mr. and Mrs. Corning Benton
 Mr. and Mrs. H. Hamilton Bissell
 Mr. and Mrs. G. Russell Booth
 Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Bradley
 Mrs. Jencia Brandt
 Mrs. Wayne Bryer
 Mr. Charles W. Caldwell
 Mr. and Mrs. George S. Carhart
 Mr. and Mrs. Frank M. Cilley
 Miss Helen Clark
 Mr. and Mrs. William B. Clark
 Rev. Walter Clem
 Dr. and Mrs. Cleon W. Colby
 Miss Ruth Colby
 Mrs. Ethel Conner
 Rev. Daniel J. Cotter
 Mrs. Laurence M. Crosbie
 Miss Lorraine Crosbie
 Mrs. William S. Davis
 Mr. and Mrs. Carl M. Dining
 Mrs. James F. Donovan
 Miss Katherine Donovan
 Mr. and Mrs. Alvah C. Drake
 Mr. and Mrs. Edward E. Emerson
 Mr. and Mrs. Eugene D. Finch
 Mr. Elliot G. Fish
 Mr. and Mrs. Winthrop E. Fiske
 Mrs. Stephen Fitzgerald
 Mr. and Mrs. Thomas M. Folds
 Mrs. George L. Fox
 Mrs. H. Gray Funkhouser
 Mr. and Mrs. W. Ernest Gillespie
 Mr. and Mrs. Winston Gottschalk
 Mr. Paul E. Gropp
 Mr. and Mrs. Harold B. Gross
 Miss Mary Grout
 Miss Helen Hale
 Mr. and Mrs. Philip M. Ham
 Mr. and Mrs. Norman L. Hatch
 Mr. and Mrs. Edward Herlihy
 Miss Theresa Henderson
 Mr. and Mrs. Malcolm T. Hill
 Mr. and Mrs. Philip N. Hobson
 Mrs. Philip E. Hulburd
 Miss Betsy Johnson
 Mr. William Jones
 Mr. and Mrs. Roger C. Kellogg
 Mrs. Warren Kellogg
 Mr. and Mrs. Shaun Kelly, Jr.
 Mrs. Adelaide C. Kent
 Mr. and Mrs. Hervey Kent
 Miss Margaret Kent
 Mr. and Mrs. Richard Kent
 Mr. and Mrs. Robert W. Kesler
 Mr. Lynn Kirtland
 Mr. Arthur Landers
 Dr. and Mrs. Arthur G. Leacock

Mr. and Mrs. Henry L. C. Leighton
 Mrs. Chilson H. Leonard
 Mr. and Mrs. Paul H. Linaberry
 Mr. and Mrs. Elbert P. Little
 Mr. and Mrs. Claude T. Lloyd
 Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Longacre
 Mrs. Emma Brown Lyman
 Mr. Ransom V. Lynch
 Mr. and Mrs. Herrick M. Macomber
 Mr. and Mrs. Albert P. Madeira
 Rev. and Mrs. Paul T. Martin
 Mrs. Robert Mason
 Miss Mary B. Mathes
 Mr. John Mayher
 Rev. John J. McCarthy
 Miss Betty L. McPherson
 Mr. George Millrood
 Mr. and Mrs. Richard Niebling
 Miss Olive Otis
 Dr. and Mrs. Franklin R. Perry
 Mrs. Henry E. Perry
 Dr. and Mrs. Lewis Perry
 Mr. and Mrs. W. Hunter Perry, Jr.
 Mr. and Mrs. James A. Pirnie
 Miss Eleanor T. Randall
 Miss Peggie Richardson
 Mr. and Mrs. Donald S. Rickard
 Mrs. Percy C. Rogers
 Mrs. Charles V. Rollins
 Mrs. John M. Rowe
 Mrs. Robert Saltonstall
 Mrs. William G. Saltonstall
 Mr. and Mrs. Grant B. Sanborn
 Dr. and Mrs. Clarence H. Sanford
 Miss Elizabeth Sawyer
 Mr. Edward R. Scott
 Miss Lucetta Sharpe
 Miss Nathalie Shute
 Mr. and Mrs. Richard E. Shute
 Mrs. Evelyn Hudson Smith
 Mr. and Mrs. Everett S. Smith
 Mr. and Mrs. John E. Smith
 Mr. and Mrs. Martin W. Souders
 Miss Dorothy J. Stevenson
 Rev. and Mrs. Carl A. Storm
 Mr. Howard S. Stuckey
 Mrs. Charles M. Swift
 Mr. and Mrs. H. B. Thayer, Jr.
 Dr. and Mrs. Louis C. Theobald
 Mr. and Mrs. Harris H. Thomas
 Miss Phyllis Turner
 Mr. Clifford H. Vroom
 Miss Mildred M. Vroom
 Mr. and Mrs. Harold J. Weeks
 Mrs. Harry H. Weist
 Mr. and Mrs. G. Spencer Wentworth
 Mr. and Mrs. Frederick R. Whitman
 Mrs. Alfred R. Wightman
 Mr. and Mrs. Myron R. Williams
 Mr. and Mrs. F. Everett Winslow

FIGURE 11

Example of Typical Programs

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(In the order of their appearance)

Clerk	WINTHROP FISKE
Stenographer	WELTHEA HILL
Bailiff	GRANT SANBORN
District Attorney Flint	GEORGE CARHART
Defense Attorney Stevens	HERRICK MACOMBER
Prison Matron	HARRIET PIRNIE
Karen Andre	HELEN HALE
Judge Heath	JACKSON ADKINS
Dr. Kirkland	MARTIN SOUDERS
Mrs. John Hutchins	SUE CARHART
Homer Van Fleet	THEODORE BRADLEY
Elmer Sweeney	FRANKLIN PERRY
Nancy Lee Faulkner	RUTH GOTTSCHALK
John Graham Whitfield	JAMES PIRNIE
Jane Chandler	FLORENCE ROWE
Magda Svenson	LILLIAN ROGERS
Sigurd Jungquist	EDWARD SCOTT
Larry Regan	PHILIP HAM
Roberta van Rensselaer	JOSEPHINE WEEKS

Director, W. HUNTER PERRY, JR.

The action of the play takes place in the Superior Court of New York City. The time is the present.

ACT I. A day in March

ACT II. The next day

ACT III. The following day

COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

<i>Scenery</i>	Dr. Arthur Leacock
<i>Tickets</i>	Malcolm Hill
<i>Properties</i>	Mary Thomas
<i>Lighting</i>	Russell Booth
<i>Make-up</i>	Mary Grout
<i>Publicity</i>	Albert Madeira
<i>Prompter</i>	Mary Booth
<i>Ushering</i>	Donald Rickard, Howard Stuckey
<i>Assistant Business Manager</i>	D'Arcy Perry

Officers of the Players

<i>President</i>	Mr. Edward R. Scott
<i>Corresponding Secretary</i>	Mrs. George S. Carhart
<i>Recording Secretary</i>	Mrs. Eugene D. Finch
<i>Treasurer</i>	Mrs. Harold B. Gross
<i>Business Manager</i>	W. Hunter Perry, Jr.

Members of the Executive Committee

Mrs. H. Hamilton Bissell	Rev. Paul T. Martin
Mr. Harold B. Gross	Mr. James A. Pirnie
Dr. Arthur G. Leacock	Mrs. Harris H. Thomas

Anyone wishing to join the Exeter Players may communicate with the corresponding secretary, Mrs. George S. Carhart.

The Players wish to express their thanks to all who have helped to make this play a success.

FIGURE 11

Example of Typical Programs

THE EXETER PLAYERS

PRESENT

HOLIDAY

BY

PHILIP BARRY

Proceeds for the Benefit of
Exeter Red Cross War Relief
Community Council for Girls

DECEMBER 3 and 4, 1940

CLUB MEMBERS

Mr. Jackson B. Adkins	Mr. and Mrs. Henry L. C. Leighton
Miss Constance Amsden	Mrs. Chilson H. Leonard
Mr. Earl A. Barrett	Mr. and Mrs. Paul H. Linaberry
Mr. Robert Bates	Miss Rosemond Linaberry
Mrs. George E. Bennett	Mr. and Mrs. Claude T. Lloyd
Mr. and Mrs. Corning Benton	Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Longacre
Mr. and Mrs. H. Hamilton Bissell	Mrs. Emma Brown Lyman
Mr. and Mrs. G. Russell Booth	Mr. Ransom V. Lynch
Mrs. Wayne Bryer	Mr. and Mrs. Herrick M. Macomber
Mr. Charles W. Caldwell	Mr. A. P. Maderia
Mr. and Mrs. George S. Carhart	Mrs. Robert Mason
Mr. and Mrs. Frank M. Cilley	Rev. and Mrs. Junius Martin
Dr. and Mrs. Cleon W. Colby	Rev. and Mrs. Paul T. Martin
Mrs. Ethel Conner	Mr. John Mayher
Miss Lucy B. Conner	Rev. John J. McCarthy
Rev. Daniel J. Cotter	Miss Betty L. McPherson
Mrs. Laurence M. Crosbie	Mr. George Millrood
Mrs. H. D'Arcy Curwen	Mrs. Henry E. Perry
Mrs. William S. Davis	Dr. and Mrs. Lewis Perry
Miss Katherine Donovan	Mr. and Mrs. W. Hunter Perry, Jr.
Mr. and Mrs. James F. Donovan	Mr. and Mrs. James A. Pirnie
Mr. and Mrs. Alvah C. Drake	Mr. and Mrs. Frank Poor
Mr. and Mrs. Edward E. Emerson	Miss Eleanor T. Randall
Mr. and Mrs. Eugene D. Finch	Mr. and Mrs. Donald S. Rickard
Mr. Elliot G. Fish	Mrs. Percy C. Rogers
Mr. and Mrs. Winthrop E. Fiske	Mrs. E. Pike Rounds
Mrs. Stephen Fitzgerald	Mrs. John M. Rowe
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas M. Folds	Mrs. William G. Saltonstall
Mrs. George L. Fox	Mrs. Clarence H. Sanford
Miss Marion Goodwin	Miss Elizabeth Sawyer
Mr. Paul E. Gropp	Mr. Edward R. Scott
Mr. and Mrs. Harold B. Gross	Mr. and Mrs. Richard E. Shute
Miss Mary Grout	Mrs. Evelyn Hudson Smith
Mr. and Mrs. Philip M. Ham	Rev. and Mrs. Charles W. F. Smith
Mr. and Mrs. Norman L. Hatch	Mr. and Mrs. Martin W. Souders
Miss Nancie Haughton	Miss Emilie S. Spring
Mrs. Victor M. Haughton	Mr. and Mrs. Jack Smith
Mr. and Mrs. Edward Herlihy	Miss Dorothy J. Stevenson
Mr. and Mrs. Malcolm T. Hill	Mr. Howard S. Stuckey
Mr. and Mrs. Philip N. Hobson	Mr. and Mrs. Henry L. Sweet
Miss Alta Horne	Miss Myrtle Summerfield
Mrs. Philip E. Hulburd	Mrs. Charles M. Swift
Rev. and Mrs. William H. Jones	Mr. and Mrs. H. B. Thayer, Jr.
Mr. William R. Jones	Dr. and Mrs. Louis C. Theobald
Mr. and Mrs. Roger Kellogg	Mr. and Mrs. Harris H. Thomas
Mr. and Mrs. Shaun Kelly, Jr.	Mr. Clifford Vroom
Mr. and Mrs. Robert W. Kesler	Miss Mildred Vroom
Mrs. Adelaide C. Kent	Miss Darrah Wagner
Miss Margaret Kent	Mrs. Harold J. Weeks
Mr. and Mrs. Hervey Kent	Mr. and Mrs. Frederick R. Whitman
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Kent	Miss Doris Wiley
Miss Kathaleen A. Kirk	Mr. and Mrs. Myron R. Williams
Mr. Arthur Landers	Mr. and Mrs. F. Everett Winslow
Dr. and Mrs. Arthur G. Leacock	

FIGURE 11

Example of Typical Programs

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Linda Seton MRS. P. C. ROGERS
 Johnny Case REV. JUNIUS MARTIN
 Julia Seton MRS. HARRY LEIGHTON
 Ned Seton MR. ROBERT KESLER
 Susan Potter MRS. GEORGE BENNETT
 Nick Potter MR. PHILIP HAM
 Edward Seton MR. HOWARD STUCKEY
 Laura Cram MRS. GEORGE CARHART
 Seton Cram MR. PAUL GROPP
 Delia MISS ELEANOR RANDALL
 Henry MR. CLIFFORD VROOM
 Charles MR. WILLIAM JONES

Director, MR. EUGENE FINCH

SCENES

ACT I. Room on the Third Floor of Edward Seton's House in
 New York
 ACT II. Room on the Top Floor
 ACT III. Room on the Third Floor

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

<i>Production Manager</i>	Mr. W. Hunter Perry, Jr.
<i>Properties</i>	Mrs. Donald Rickard
<i>Costumes</i>	Mrs. Philip Ham
<i>Scenery</i>	Dr. Arthur G. Leacock
<i>Lighting</i>	Mr. Andrew Longacre
<i>Ticket Sales and Distribution</i>	Mr. and Mrs. Martin Souders
<i>Publicity</i>	Mrs. Malcolm T. Hill
<i>Ushering</i>	Miss Dorothy Stevenson
<i>Prompter</i>	Miss Eleanor Randall
<i>Make-up</i>	Miss Mary Grout

Officers of the Players

<i>President</i>	Mr. Edward R. Scott
<i>Corresponding Secretary</i>	Mrs. George S. Carhart
<i>Recording Secretary</i>	Mrs. Charles W. F. Smith
<i>Treasurer</i>	Mrs. Harold B. Gross
<i>Business Manager</i>	Mrs. Edward E. Emerson

Members of the Executive Committee

Mr. Eugene D. Finch	Mr. Harold B. Gross
Mr. John Mayer	Mr. W. Hunter Perry, Jr.
Dr. Cleon W. Colby	Dr. Arthur G. Leacock

Anyone wishing to join the Exeter Players may communicate with the corresponding secretary, Mrs. George S. Carhart

The Players wish to express their thanks to all who have helped to make this play a success

FIGURE 11

Example of Typical Programs

Example of typical structure

WATER

CLAY

EFFICIENCY

salesmen for such program advertising usually dare not refuse, but nevertheless they resent the necessity of complying. On the other hand, many business concerns are glad to offer whatever facilities they have which may be of use to the club. Furniture stores are often glad to lend drapes or furnishings. Newspapers or printers will sometimes print tickets or programs free of charge. Clothing stores may be glad to lend dresses and hats or any unusual items of apparel which they have. In all such cases it is essential that a credit line acknowledging such efforts be displayed prominently in the program and in any newspaper releases as well.

The advertising committee is responsible, under the guidance of the business manager, for determining the type of advertising to be used. Posters, fliers (either distributed manually from door to door or sent through the mail), newspaper and radio advertising all may be used as best suits the need of the individual organization. The advertising committee is also responsible for publicity releases to any publication which will use them, or in the event that reporters are present at the dress rehearsal or the night of the actual performance, this committee should make certain that such reporters get their facts straight and should arrange for any interviews, and be prepared to offer any unusual stories or incidents which might prove

selection for such program development usually have not been made, but nevertheless they present the necessity of completion. On the other hand, many business concerns are likely to offer whatever facilities they have which may be used to the effect. The more common are often used to hold classes or conferences. Newspapers or printers will also place their facilities on programs free of charge. Clothing stores may be asked to lend dresses and hats on any required items of apparel which they have. In all such cases it is essential that a credit check be made before any effort is expended on behalf of the program and in any newspaper reference as well.

The advertising committee is responsible, under the guidance of the business manager, for determining the type of advertising to be used. Reports, letters, other distributed material from door to door or sent through the mail, newspaper and radio advertising will and be used as best suits the need of the individual organization. The advertising committee is also responsible for making releases to any publication which will use them, or in the event that reporters are present at the given rehearsal or the night of the actual performance, this committee should make certain that such reporters get their facts straight and should interview for any interviews, and be prepared to offer any unusual stories or incidents which may occur.

news-worthy. Arrangements for pictures also fall within the scope of those responsible for the advertising. In most small communities, the publicity value of photographs, either individual portraits or group pictures of the actors in action, cannot be over-estimated.

The committee in charge of sales must work closely with the ticket committee and advertising committee. For amateur performances, tickets must be sold in advance. All expenses of any play should be assured before the box office opens on the evening of the first performance. The sale of tickets in advance can best be accomplished by utilizing the services of the club members themselves. Each member of the sales committee should be given a portion of the club membership and be held responsible for the activities of that group as far as sales are concerned.

The head usher is a very important person. Inasmuch as his duties do not really begin until the play is actually presented, it is well to give this job to some important member of the club who may be too busy to give time to a long period of preparation, but may be quite willing to do his bit. This head usher should thoroughly familiarize himself with the arrangement of the auditorium. He should make certain that his assistants are acquainted with these details as well. If this is done, any possible dissatisfaction on the part of the paying customers will

news-worthy. Arrangements for pictures also fall within the scope of those responsible for the advertising. In most small communities, the publicity value of photographs, either individual portraits or group pictures of the actors in action, cannot be over-estimated.

The committee in charge of sales must work closely with the ticket committee and advertising committee. For regular performances, tickets must be sold in advance. All expenses of any play should be assumed before the box office opens on the evening of the first performance. The sale of tickets in advance can best be accomplished by utilizing the services of the club members themselves. Each member of the sales committee should be given a portion of the club membership and be held responsible for the activities of that group as far as sales are concerned. The head usher is a very important person. Inasmuch as his duties do not really begin until the play is actually presented, it is well to give this job to some important member of the club who may be too busy to give time to a long period of preparation, but may be quite willing to do his bit. This head usher should thoroughly familiarize himself with the arrangement of the auditorium. He should make certain that his assistants are acquainted with these details as well. If this is done, any possible dissatisfaction on the part of the paying customers will

probably be avoided.

The business manager himself, in addition to being responsible for the activities of all these subcommittees, has a good many duties which he cannot delegate to subordinates. He must arrange for hiring the auditorium, he must keep a strict current account of all expenditures and sales. He must be familiar with the regulations of all government agencies, federal, state, and local, concerning taxes to be collected and paid. He must comply with all local police and fire department regulations. In most communities, at least one fireman must be on hand during all public gatherings, and his services must be paid for by the organization. Likewise there is usually a janitor for every auditorium that is hired who also expects to receive some remuneration for his presence.

Most amateur groups plan to donate the profits of public performances to local charities. Thus, in addition to the intangible benefits gained by the community through the participation in and the witnessing of a good theatrical presentation, the group assumes a new importance in the eyes of many who would otherwise have no interest whatever in its activities. New equipment acquired for any particular play can quite legitimately be entered as an expense of that play, although such materials may be destined to become part of the permanent property of the club. Many organiza-

probably be avoided.

The business manager himself, in addition to being responsible for the activities of all these subcommittees, has a good many duties which he cannot delegate to subordinates. He must arrange for hiring the auditor, he must keep a strict current account of all expenditures and sales. He must be familiar with the regulations of all government agencies, federal, state, and local, concerning taxes to be collected and paid. He must comply with all local police and fire department regulations. In most communities, at least one fireman must be on hand during all public entertainments, and his services must be paid for by the organization. Likewise there is usually a janitor for every auditorium that is hired who also expects to receive some remuneration for his presence.

Most amateur groups aim to donate the profits of public performances to local charities. Thus, in addition to the intangible benefits gained by the community through the participation in and the witnessing of a good theatrical presentation, the group assumes a new importance in the eyes of many who would otherwise have no interest whatever in its activities. New equipment acquired for any particular play can quite legitimately be entered as an expense of that play, although such materials may be destined to become part of the permanent property of the club. Many organiza-

FIGURE 12

Typical Business Manager's Statement

(Presented after the completion of a public presentation.)

Gross Receipts	\$196.00
(\$188.90 banked to the credit of the club. \$7.10 to be paid as government tax from the general treasury for 142 members' tickets pre- sented at the door)	
Expenses	
Royalty	\$40.00
Hall Rental	25.00
Newspaper (Programs \$13.00, Ad \$8.00, Window Cards \$3.50.)	24.50
Lighting Committee	.50
Property Committee	.50
Trucking	1.00
Flowers	.50
Total Expenses	<u>\$91.50</u>
Total Government Tax	\$24.35
Gross Receipts to the club less tax	\$171.65
Net Receipts to the club	80.15
Supplement to receipts, from General Treasury	<u>28.20</u>
Total donation to American Red Cross	\$108.35

Tickets donated by Mr. John Doe of the Doe Printing Co.
Expenses of Books, and for Staging and Lighting supplies
which become permanent properties of the club will be paid
out of the general treasury, as well as the cost for
photographs which will be preserved in the club scrap book.

Respectfully submitted,

 Business Manager

FIGURE 12

Typical Business Manager's Statement

(Presented after the completion of a public presentation.)

\$135.00

Gross Receipts
 (\$135.00 less to the credit of the club.
 \$7.10 paid as government tax from the
 general treasury for 142 members' tickets pre-
 sented at the door)

Expenses	
Royalty	\$40.00
Ball Rental	\$25.00
Newspaper Program	\$15.00, Ad \$5.00
Window Cards	\$2.50
Printing Committee	.50
Property Committee	.50
Trunking	1.00
Flowers	.50
Total Expenses	\$91.50

Total Government Tax \$24.50

Gross Receipts to the club less tax \$110.50

Net Receipts to the club \$80.10

Supplement to receipts from General Treasury \$8.20

Total donation to American Red Cross \$88.30

Tickets donated by Mr. John Doe of the Doe Printing Co.
 Expenses of books, and for stationery and printing supplies
 which become permanent properties of the club will be paid
 out of the general treasury, as well as the cost for
 photographs which will be preserved in the club's own book.

Respectfully submitted,

Business Manager

tions, however, choose to augment the receipts of a particular performance by a contribution from the club treasury to pay for permanent equipment so acquired.

The question of complimentary tickets is bound to arise, but if the play is being given for charity, it is usually unnecessary to present free tickets to any other than newspapers who may be sending critics to review the performance.

In brief, the business manager's job is not an easy one. He must keep tabs on everyone who is working for him, and, in so doing, his job is far more difficult than that of most other committee chairmen because there is little glamour to the things which he must accomplish.

tions, however, choose to augment the receipts of a particular performance by a contribution from the club treasury to pay for permanent equipment so acquired.

The question of complimentary tickets is bound to arise, but if the play is being given for charity, it is usually unnecessary to present free tickets to any other than newspapers who may be sending critics to review the performance.

In brief, the business manager's job is not an easy one. He must keep tabs on everyone who is working for him, and, in so doing, his job is far more difficult than that of most other committee chairmen because there is little answer to the things which he must accomplish.

CHAPTER XII

THE DRESS REHEARSAL

The dress rehearsal should be the climax of the preparatory period for the presentation of any play. To insure the creation of a professional atmosphere when it is finally offered to the public, every effort should be made to maintain conditions comparable with those of an actual performance during the entire dress rehearsal. At least one regular rehearsal on the actual set with all arrangements as complete as possible should be held before this final practice session. At that time, the actors can adapt themselves to the novel conditions of the stage, and any minor changes found to be essential can be effected.

CHAPTER XII

THE DRESS REHEARSAL

All adjustments of scenery, lighting, costuming, and make-up should be completed fifteen minutes prior to curtain time on the night of the dress rehearsal. At that moment it should be considered that the house is being opened to an audience, and, from then on to the closing of the final curtain, an absolute atmosphere of an actual performance should be maintained.

The director must never interrupt for any reason, regardless how fouled up the actors may become. No actor can be permitted to step out of his part for an instant to make suggestions, such as: "Let's start this act over." If

CHAPTER XII

THE DRESS REHEARSAL

THE BOY BOON

CHAPTER XII

THE DRESS REHEARSAL

The dress rehearsal should be the climax of the preparatory period for the presentation of any play. To insure the creation of a professional atmosphere when it is finally offered to the public, every effort should be made to maintain conditions comparable with those of an actual performance during the entire dress rehearsal. At least one regular rehearsal on the actual set with all arrangements as complete as possible should be held before this final practice session. At that time, the actors can adapt themselves to the novel conditions of an actual stage, and any minor changes found to be essential can be effected.

All adjustments of scenery, lighting, costuming, and makeup should be completed fifteen minutes prior to curtain time on the night of the dress rehearsal. At that moment it should be considered that the house is being opened to an audience, and, from then on to the closing of the final curtain, an absolute atmosphere of an actual performance should be maintained.

The director must never interrupt for any reason, regardless how fouled up the actors may become. No actor can be permitted to step out of his part for an instant to make suggestions, such as: "Let's start this act over." If

CHAPTER XII

THE DRESS REHEARSAL

The dress rehearsal should be the climax of the preparatory period for the presentation of any play. To insure the creation of a professional atmosphere when it is finally offered to the public, every effort should be made to maintain conditions comparable with those of an actual performance during the entire dress rehearsal. At least one regular rehearsal on the actual set with all arrangements as complete as possible should be held before this final dress rehearsal. At that time, the actors can adapt themselves to the novel conditions of an actual stage, and any minor changes found to be essential can be effected.

All adjustments of scenery, lighting, costumes, and make-up should be completed fifteen minutes prior to curtain time on the night of the dress rehearsal. At that moment it should be considered that the house is being opened to an audience, and, from then on to the closing of the final curtain, an absolute atmosphere of an actual performance should be maintained.

The director must never interrupt for any reason, regardless how fouled up the actors may become. No actor can be permitted to step out of his part for an instant to make suggestions, such as: "Let's start this act over." If

the director has comments which he feels he must make to his actors between acts, he should step backstage to make them, but he must not interfere with costume changes or any other necessary activity which would lengthen the between-act interval. After the rehearsal is completely finished, he should assemble his complete cast on the stage for any general comments which he considers necessary. If he feels that certain portions of the play should be gone through again, he can accomplish this then, or make arrangements for additional rehearsals between that time and the final performance at an hour convenient to all concerned.

To carry out the illusion of a real performance at a dress rehearsal, an audience of some sort is essential. This audience will probably be composed of committee members who have assisted with some aspect of the preparation, and may be augmented by members of the press who might therefore be enabled to write reviews which would appear in the papers on the day of the actual performance. In addition, the privilege of attending this preview may be extended to club members who, for personal reasons, are unable to be present at any of the regular performances, and to invalids in the community who find it inconvenient to participate in public gatherings. A few words to this small audience, delivered either by the producer or director prior to the beginning of the performance, may be of great

the director has comments which he feels he must make to his actors between acts, he should stop backstage to make them, but he must not interfere with costume changes or any other necessary activity which would lengthen the between-act interval. After the rehearsal is completely finished, he should assemble his complete cast on the stage for any general comments which he considers necessary. If he feels that certain portions of the play should be gone through again, he can accomplish this then, or make arrangements for additional rehearsals between that time and the final performance at an hour convenient to all concerned.

To carry out the illusion of a real performance at a dress rehearsal, an audience of some sort is essential. This audience will probably be composed of committee members who have assisted with some aspect of the preparation, and may be augmented by members of the press who might therefore be enabled to write reviews which would appear in the papers on the day of the actual performance. In addition, the privilege of attending this preview may be extended to club members who, for personal reasons, are unable to be present at any of the regular performances, and to invalids in the community who find it inconvenient to participate in public entertainments. A few words to this small audience, delivered either by the producer or director prior to the beginning of the performance, may be of great

help to the actors. The audience should be told that every attempt is being made to simulate a real performance, and that it will be greatly appreciated if they will assist by reacting normally in accordance with their feelings, just as if they were sitting in a crowded theatre.

Many amateurs ignore certain apparently minor considerations, thus irreparably marring the smoothness of the performance as a whole. First of all, the person in charge of the operation of the main curtain should be carefully instructed in his job. Nothing looks more amateurish than a curtain which is opened or closed by a succession of jerks. The stage manager should make certain that the curtain man and the electrician follow his instructions exactly at the beginnings and at the ends of acts. When the play is about to begin, the stage lights should be brought up slowly until they are all adjusted as required for the opening of the act. Next, the auditorium lights should be dimmed slowly until they are entirely out. If these operations occupy two to three minutes, the audience should have had time to get settled and to quiet down. However, not until the house is entirely silent should the stage manager give the signal for the opening of the main curtain.

At the end of each act, the curtain should, of course, be closed promptly on the proper cue, following which no change should be made in the lighting until the applause

help to the actors. The audience should be told that every attempt is being made to simulate a real performance, and that it will be greatly appreciated if they will assist by reacting normally in accordance with their feelings, just as if they were sitting in a crowded theatre.

Many amateurs ignore certain apparently minor considerations, thus improperly marking the smoothness of the performance as a whole. First of all, the person in charge of the operation of the main curtain should be carefully instructed in his job. Nothing looks more amateurish than a curtain which is opened or closed by a succession of jerks. The stage manager should make certain that the curtain man and the electrician follow his instructions exactly at the beginning and at the end of acts. When the play is about to begin, the stage lights should be brought up slowly until they are all adjusted as required for the opening of the act. Next, the auditorium lights should be dimmed slowly until they are entirely out. If these operations occupy two to three minutes, the audience should have had time to get settled and to quiet down. However, not until the house is entirely silent should the stage manager give the signal for the opening of the main curtain.

At the end of each act, the curtain should, of course, be closed promptly on the proper cue, following which no change should be made in the lighting until the applause

has begun to subside. As this occurs, the house lights should be brought up gradually, but more quickly than they were dimmed at the beginning of the act. Lastly the stage lights should be turned off.

Curtain calls at the end of the last act must be carefully planned. The curtain should be quickly re-opened after the conclusion of the play as soon as the applause has reached its peak, disclosing first the same actors who were on stage as the play ended. It should then be closed quickly, and the entire cast should speedily assemble on the stage in pre-arranged positions. As soon as all are gathered, the curtain is opened again. It may be permitted to remain open a few moments longer this time. If the applause continues for five seconds after this second closing of the curtain, it may be re-opened, and the principals be given the opportunity to take a step forward and bow. After it has closed this time, all actors except the principals should immediately leave the stage. If applause still continues and only the principals are left on the stage, they may be given another curtain call. It will be a most unusual performance that inspires an audience to demand more than four curtain calls. If at any time the applause stops, the curtain should remain closed and the house lights be turned on at once. If wild enthusiasm still continues after the fourth call, a curtain speech by the lead-

has begun to subside. As this occurs, the house lights should be brought up gradually, but more quickly than they were dimmed at the beginning of the act. Lastly, the stage lights should be turned off.

Curtain calls at the end of the last act must be carefully planned. The curtain should be quickly re-opened after the conclusion of the play as soon as the applause has reached its peak, disclosing first the same actors who were on stage as the play ended. It should then be closed quickly, and the entire cast should speedily assemble on the stage in pre-arranged positions. As soon as all are gathered, the curtain is opened again. It may be permitted to remain open a few moments longer this time. If the applause continues for five seconds after this second closing of the curtain, it may be re-opened, and the principals be given the opportunity to take a step forward and bow. After it has closed this time, all actors except the principals should immediately leave the stage. If applause still continues and only the principals are left on the stage, they may be given another curtain call. It will be a most unusual performance that inspires an audience to demand more than four curtain calls. If at any time the applause stops, the curtain should remain closed and the house lights be turned on at once. If wild enthusiasm still continues after the fourth call, a curtain speech by the lead-

ing actor may be required in order to subdue it. This practice is to be frowned upon, and should be permitted only under very unusual circumstances.

It is an old adage of amateurs that a poor dress rehearsal guarantees a good final performance, but in actual practice this is nonsense. If a dress rehearsal is extremely poor, the final presentation may be better by comparison, but it is still unlikely to be good. A good dress rehearsal is a far better guarantee of a finished final production.

CHAPTER XIII

THE PERFORMANCE

any actor may be required in order to subdue it. This practice is to be frowned upon, and should be permitted only under very unusual circumstances.

It is an old adage of amateurs that a poor dress rehearsal guarantees a good final performance, but in actual practice this is nonsense. If a dress rehearsal is extremely poor, the final presentation may be better by comparison, but it is still unlikely to be good. A good dress rehearsal is a far better guarantee of a finished final production.

CHAPTER XIII

THE PERFORMANCE

When an amateur production is finally performed before an audience, the same professional atmosphere should be present as was insisted upon at the dress rehearsal. Actors should not be permitted to mingle with the arriving patrons, and, above all, they should not peek through the curtain to see how many people there are "out front." If the dress rehearsal has been properly handled, these matters should present no problem when the first public performance is given. Likewise, if the actors have been made to pull themselves out of what

CHAPTER XIII

THE PERFORMANCE

into which they were plunged during the dress rehearsal, no such occasions should arise thereafter.

It is always advisable to begin plays at the exact moment for which they have been scheduled. However, in the event that the audience is still entering the auditorium when the play is ready to begin, a slight delay is recommended. Some method of liaison or signaling should be worked out between the business manager and the stage manager to cover such a contingency. Nevertheless, the possibility of the audience arriving late must not serve as an excuse for any actor or other backstage functionary not being prepared exactly on time.

CHAPTER XIII

THE PERFORMANCE

It is best to have CHAPTER XIII
entrances to the auditorium. An usher placed at the head
THE PERFORMANCE
of each aisle for this purpose, with the additional function

When an amateur production is finally performed before an audience, the same professional atmosphere should be present as was insisted upon at the dress rehearsal. Actors should not be permitted to mingle with the arriving patrons, and, above all, they should not peek through the curtain to see how many people there are "out front." If the dress rehearsal has been properly handled, these matters should present no problem when the first public performance is given. Likewise, if the actors have been made to pull themselves out of any difficulties into which they were plunged during the dress rehearsal, no such occasions should arise thereafter.

It is always advisable to begin plays at the exact moment for which they have been scheduled. However, in the event that the audience is still entering the auditorium when the play is ready to begin, a slight delay is recommended. Some method of liaison or signaling should be worked out between the business manager and the stage manager to cover such a contingency. Nevertheless, the possibility of the audience arriving late must not serve as an excuse for any actor or other backstage functionary not being prepared exactly on time.

CHAPTER XIII

THE PERFORMANCE

When an amateur production is finally performed before an audience, the same professional atmosphere should be present as was insisted upon at the dress rehearsal. Actors should not be permitted to mingle with the arriving patrons, and, above all, they should not peek through the curtain to see how many people there are "out front." If the dress rehearsal has been properly handled, these matters should present no problem when the first public performance is given. Likewise, if the actors have been made to pull themselves out of any difficulties into which they were plunged during the dress rehearsal, no such occasions should arise thereafter.

It is always advisable to begin plays at the exact moment for which they have been scheduled. However, in the event that the audience is still entering the auditorium when the play is ready to begin, a slight delay is recommended. Some method of liaison or signaling should be worked out between the business manager and the stage manager to cover such a contingency. Nevertheless, the possibility of the audience arriving late must not serve as an excuse for any actor or other backstage functionary not being prepared exactly on time.

It is best to hand out programs at the entrance or entrances to the auditorium. An usher placed at the head of each aisle for this purpose, with the additional function of directing people to the approximate area of their seats, will avoid much confusion. An additional usher, unencumbered with programs, should work in the aisle assisting those who have been previously directed to him to find their seats. It is well for any dramatic club to establish the practice of not seating late-comers until during the first intermission. Once this habit becomes known, audiences will make it a point to arrive promptly. Some dramatic clubs utilize the sale of flowers and candy before the show and between the acts as a method of increasing revenue. Although this may be copied from the professional theatre, it is usually more trouble and bother than it is worth. However, the distribution of questionnaires during intermission asking the members of the audience to indicate their preferences for future plays, may be of great value to any club. A typical questionnaire of this sort is shown in Figure 13.

The custom of presenting flowers over the footlights to members of the cast should be avoided. Most frequently among amateurs such tokens are merely representative of the personal esteem in which the individual is held by his friends, and are seldom any real tribute to an excellent performance. Let any such tokens be delivered to the dress-

It is best to hand out programs at the entrance or entrances to the auditorium. An usher placed at the head of each aisle for this purpose, with the additional function of directing people to the approximate area of their seats, will avoid much confusion. An additional usher, unnumbered with programs, should work in the aisle assisting those who have been previously directed to him to find their seats. It is well for any dramatic club to establish the practice of not seating late-comers until during the first intermission. Once this habit becomes known, audiences will make it a point to arrive promptly. Some dramatic clubs utilize the sale of flowers and candy before the show and between the acts as a method of increasing revenue. Although this may be copied from the professional theatre, it is usually more trouble and bother than it is worth. However, the distribution of questionnaires during intermission asking the members of the audience to indicate their preference for future plays, may be of great value to any club. A typical questionnaire of this sort is shown in Figure 15.

The custom of presenting flowers over the footlights to members of the cast should be avoided. Most frequently among amateurs such tokens are merely representative of the personal esteem in which the individual is held by his friends, and are seldom any real tribute to an excellent performance. Let any such tokens be delivered to the dress-

ing room of the person of FIGURE 13 and let friends visit there after the show to see their offerings on display.

QUESTIONNAIRE 1

To Be Distributed to Members of the
Audience During Intermission

In what type of play are you most interested?

Check below:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Musical | <input type="checkbox"/> Light Comedy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Serious Drama | <input type="checkbox"/> Farce |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Folk Drama | <input type="checkbox"/> Recent Broadway Success |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tragedy | <input type="checkbox"/> Propaganda Play |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Melodrama | <input type="checkbox"/> Classical Drama |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Old Fashioned Burlesque | <input type="checkbox"/> Shaw |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Melodrama | <input type="checkbox"/> Ibsen |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Modern Mystery | <input type="checkbox"/> Shakespeare |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Greek |

1 Jean Carter and Jess Ogden, Everyman's Drama,
American Association for Adult Education, New York, 1938.

FIGURE 13

QUESTIONNAIRE 1

To Be Distributed to Members of the
Audience During Introduction

In what type of play are you most interested?

Check below:

_____ Musical	_____ Light Comedy
_____ Serious Drama	_____ Farce
_____ Soliloquy	_____ Recent Broadway Success
_____ Tragedy	_____ Propaganda Play
_____ Melodrama	_____ Classical Drama
_____ Old Fashioned Burlesque	_____ Shaw
_____ Melodrama	_____ Ibsen
_____ Modern Mystery	_____ Shakespeare
	_____ Greek

1 Jean Carter and Jess O'Brien, Everman's Drama,
American Association for Adult Education, New York, 1938.

ing room of the person concerned, and let friends visit there after the show to see their offerings on display.

One of the greatest difficulties backstage in an amateur performance is the avoidance of uninvited visitors between the acts. It will be found most helpful to station members of the club at the stage door or any other entrances to the stage area for the purpose of politely but firmly excluding such well-meaning friends of the cast or committee members. Arrangements can be made to conduct any seriously interested individuals backstage after the show is over.

If plans have been carefully enough made, and if all members of the cast and production committees adhere to the instructions which have been given them, the actual performance should proceed without a hitch, and indeed be almost an anticlimax to the preceding weeks of activity.

the room of the person concerned, and let friends visit there after the show to see their offerings on display.

One of the greatest difficulties backstage is an amateur performance is the avoidance of unwanted visitors between the acts. It will be found most helpful to station members of the club at the stage door or any other entrances to the stage area for the purpose of politely but firmly excluding such well-meaning friends of the cast or committee members. Arrangements can be made to conduct any seriously interested individuals backstage after the show is over.

If plans have been carefully enough made, and if all members of the cast and production committee adhere to the instructions which have been given them, the actual performance should proceed without a hitch, and indeed be almost an anticlimax to the preceding weeks of activity.

CHAPTER XIV

THE MOPPING UP

When the play has finally been given, the work is by no means over. Every dramatic club must keep in mind the fact that any public performance is merely an incident in the career of the organization. Care must be taken to preserve and store everything which the club owns for future performances. Equal care must be given to the return of any item which has been borrowed, and to the repair or replacement of anything which has been damaged or lost.

CHAPTER XIV

THE MOPPING UP

The business manager, of course, must make his financial reckoning, and should submit a full account, not only to the organization, but to the public as well. The publicity committee should make certain that it has acquired every published item referring to the performance just given, including all reviews of the play. These should be preserved in the club scrapbook as a guide for future endeavors.

Above all else, an early meeting of club members should be held following every performance for the purpose of an informal discussion of the play just given. At this time, not only the club members' own opinions and constructive criticisms should be voiced, but any comments known to them which have been made by outsiders, should be carefully considered. If these steps are followed every time a play

CHAPTER XIV

THE HOPPING UP

109

has been given, a club "CHAPTER XIV better and better, and
make for itself a definite and worthwhile place in the life
of the community of which it is a part.

THE MOPPING UP

When the play has finally been given, the work is by no means over. Every dramatic club must keep in mind the fact that any public performance is merely an incident in the career of the organization. Care must be taken to preserve and store everything which the club owns for future performances. Equal care must be given to the return of any item which has been borrowed, and to the repair or replacement of anything which has been damaged or lost.

The business manager, of course, must make his financial reckoning, and should give a full account, not only to the organization, but to the public as well. The publicity committee should make certain that it has acquired every published item referring to the performance just given, including all reviews of the play. These should be preserved in the club scrapbook as a guide for future endeavors.

Above all else, an early meeting of club members should be held following every performance for the purpose of an informal discussion of the play just given. At this time, not only the club members' own opinions and constructive criticisms should be voiced, but any comments known to them which have been made by outsiders, should be carefully considered. If these steps are followed every time a play

CHAPTER XIV

THE MORNING UP

When the play has finally been given, the work is by

no means over. Every dramatic club must keep in mind the

fact that any public performance is merely an incident in

the career of the organization. Care must be taken to pre-

serve and store everything which the club owns for future

performances. Equal care must be given to the return of any

item which has been borrowed, and to the repair or replace-

ment of anything which has been damaged or lost.

The business manager, of course, must make his finan-

cial reckoning, and should give a full account, not only to

the organization, but to the public as well. The publicity

committee should make certain that it has acquired every

published item referring to the performance just given, in-

cluding all reviews of the play. These should be preserved

in the club scrapbook as a guide for future endeavors.

Above all else, an early meeting of club members

should be held following every performance for the purpose

of an informal discussion of the play just given. At this

time, not only the club members' own opinions and criticisms

but any criticisms should be voiced, but any comments known to

them which have been made by outsiders should be carefully

considered. If these steps are followed every time a play

has been given, a club should become better and better, and make for itself a definite and worthwhile place in the life of the community of which it is a part.

has been given, a ship should become better and better, and
make for itself a definite and worthwhile place in the life
of the community of which it is a part.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Although this book has been written primarily for the amateur group which has not had the benefit of very wide experience, it is hoped that it contains a sufficient number of novel ideas so that anyone interested in amateur dramatics will have gained something from the reading of it. In an organization group and because were additional in its chapters, there are many illustrations which can serve as guides to an efficient and attractive program. Such a plan can be found in the appendix, it is a wise move to have a prospectus of the book as a means of general distribution. A sample of such a prospectus is shown in Figure 14.

CHAPTER XV

CONCLUSION

A little booklet entitled The First Day Theatre Program, written by Allen Green, is an excellent work for anyone who plans an extensive program in the amateur field. Although this book is written from the point of view of the small amateur stock company, much of it is equally applicable to amateur clubs having a community center for winter season. Unfortunately, it is not easily available because it is not printed and printed by the author, but copies can be found in many local libraries.

When any dramatic organization goes to the point

VI. RICHARD

COMMISSION

CHAPTER XV

CONCLUSION

Although this book has been written primarily for the amateur group which has not had the benefit of very wide experience, it is hoped that it contains a sufficient number of novel ideas so that anyone interested in amateur dramatics will have gained something from the reading of it. As an organization grows and becomes more ambitious in its endeavors, there are many publications which can serve as guides to an enlarged and extensive program. When a club can make seasonal plans, it is a wise move to issue a prospectus at the beginning of the season for general distribution. A sample of such a prospectus is shown in Figure 14.

A little publication entitled The Straw Hat Theatre Presents, written by Alice Orman, is an excellent work for any group which plans an extensive increase in its activities. Although this book is written from the point of view of the small summer stock company, much of it is equally applicable to amateur clubs serving a community during the winter season. Unfortunately, it is not easily available inasmuch as it was handset and printed by the author, but copies can be found in many large libraries.

When any dramatic organization gets to the point

CHAPTER XV

CONCLUSION

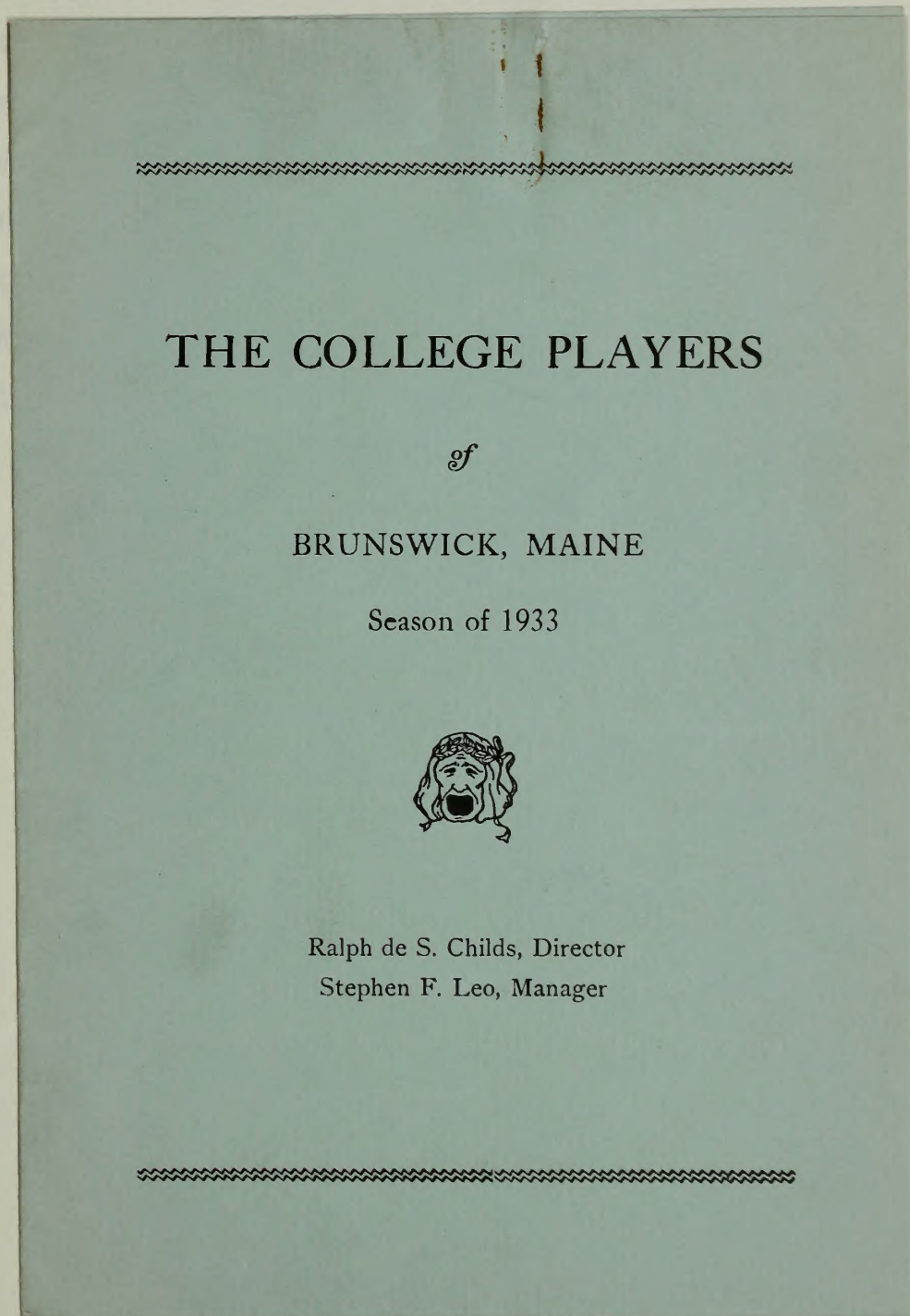
Although this book has been written primarily for the student group which has not had the benefit of very wide experience, it is hoped that it contains a sufficient number of novel ideas so that anyone interested in student activities will have gained something from the reading of it. As an organization grows and becomes more ambitious in its endeavors, there are many problems which can arise as related to an enlarged and extensive program. When a club can take occasional plans, it is a wise move to have a prospectus at the beginning of the season for general distribution. A sample of such a prospectus is shown in Figure 14.

A little publication entitled The Green Hat Theatre Prospect, written by Alice Green, is an excellent work for any group which plans an extensive increase in the activities. Although this book is written from the point of view of the small summer stock company, much of it is equally applicable to student clubs serving a community during the winter season. Unfortunately, it is not easily available inasmuch as it was hand-set and printed by the author, but copies can be found in many large libraries.

When any dramatic organization gets to the point

FIGURE 14

Typical Seasonal Prospectus



MEMBERS OF THE ACTING COMPANY

Margot Russell

Margaret Hines

Dorothy Church

Gertrude Libby

Mildred Thalheimer

Emily Holmes

Frances Larrabee

Paul Killiam, Jr.

Philip Parker

Edwin G. Walker

Willard Travis

Wyman Holmes

Philip Wilder

W. Hunter Perry, Jr., Production Manager

Albert P. Madeira, Stage Manager

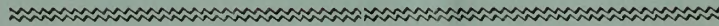
George Bartter, Ass't. Business Manager

Telephone, Brunswick 497-M.

Mail, Brunswick, Maine

FIGURE 14

Typical Seasonal Prospectus



LIST OF PLAYS

The Second Man

A Murder Has Been Arranged

Murray Hill

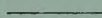
Your Uncle Dudley

The Perfect Alibi

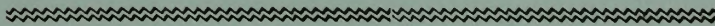
The Play's the Thing

The Man Who Changed his Name

This Thing Called Love



Weekly plans of the company will be announced by posters, and through the news papers.



PERFORMANCES

Mondays, Brunswick

Tuesdays, Boothbay Harbor

Fridays, Portland

Other days during the week the company presents plays at various shore towns from Kennebunk to Northport. The plays run for one week, and are then changed, each play having its initial performance at Brunswick in Memorial Hall on the Bowdoin Campus. Portland performances are given at the Playhouse, and in Boothbay Harbor, the Opera House is used.

FIGURE 14

Typical Seasonal Prospectus

Typical Seasonal Prospecting

Q1000

W. E. 7. 5. 00

W. E. 7. 5. 00

ELIOT & BROWN

where it is able to make plans for a theatre of its own, a copy of Proscenium and Sight Lines, by Richard Southern, should prove to be an invaluable asset. As described on the title page, this publication is "A complete system of scenery planning and a guide to the layout of stages for scene designers, stage managers, theatre architects and engineers, theatrical historians and research workers, and those concerned with the planning of stages for small halls." I need say no more, other than that it definitely fulfills its promise.

ABSTRACT

where it is able to make plans for a theatre of its own.
 a row of Proscenium and Side Boxes, by Michael Smith.
 should prove to be an invaluable asset. As described on
 the title page, this publication is "A complete system of
 scenery planning and a guide to the layout of stages for
 scene designers, stage managers, theatre architects and
 engineers, theatrical historians and research workers,
 and those concerned with the planning of stages for small
 halls." I need say no more, other than that it definitely
 fulfills its promise.

ABSTRACT

1948-50

1950-51

1951-52

1952-53

1953-54

1954-55

1955-56

1956-57

1957-58

1958-59

1959-60

1960-61

ABSTRACT

The book has been written for the purpose of offering the enthusiastic amateur dramatist, in one short easily-readable volume, a quick narration of the essential details of organizing an amateur dramatic club which will satisfy the latent desires of its members, and which will be of service to the community to which it belongs. I have called this "A Complete Guide for Non-Professional Dramatic Organizations", but in so doing I have not meant to imply that I have treated completely all aspects of amateur theatrical production. A solution for each problem presented has been suggested, and I trust that sufficient sources for more complete information have been given so that any reader who desires extensive acquaintance with any particular activity of the amateur theatre will, at least, find directions as to the sources of such information.

Wherever pertinent, I have related anecdotes culled from my twenty years of experience with amateur dramatic groups. For every difficulty likely to be encountered, I have offered a solution, and I have definitely attempted to avoid giving several alternative answers to questions, which might only serve to confuse the reader. The illustrations offered have been carefully selected to give added emphasis to certain pertinent points described in the book, with a consequent economy of verbiage.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The book has been written for the purpose of offering the enthusiastic amateur dramatist, in one short easily-usable volume, a quick reference of the essential details of organizing an amateur dramatic club which will satisfy the latent desires of the members, and which will be of service to the community in which it belongs. I have called this "A Complete Guide for Non-Professional Dramatic Enthusiasts", but in so doing I have not meant to imply that I have treated completely all aspects of amateur theatrical production. A solution for each problem suggested has been suggested, and I trust that sufficient sources for more complete information have been given so that any reader who desires extensive acquaintance with any particular activity of the amateur theatre will, at least, find directions as to the sources of such information. Whenever pertinent, I have related anecdotes culled from my twenty years of experience with amateur dramatic groups. For every difficulty likely to be encountered, I have offered a solution, and I have definitely attempted to avoid giving several alternative answers to questions which might only serve to confuse the reader. The illustrations offered have been carefully selected to give added emphasis to certain pertinent points mentioned in the book, with a consequent economy of verbiage.

In the opening chapters, I have stated my reasons for attempting this work, and have given a partial account of the background which has made it possible. I have then begun with suggestions concerning the actual organization of an amateur dramatic association. I have suggested the form for a constitution, a limited number of officers, and a plan for beginning activity with informal readings presented exclusively for the club membership.

Next, I have made suggestions concerning the formation of a reading committee for the selection of a play for public presentation. The tastes and sensibilities of the local audience, the difficulties of acting and staging, suggestions as to types of plays and, even more specifically, titles of certain sure-fire hits, have all been included.

Chapters V through XI deal with the particular responsibilities of the department heads or committee chairmen necessary for the assurance of a professional-looking performance. The duties of the producer, the director, the scene designer, the electrician, the property manager, the stage manager and minor backstage functionaries, and the business manager and his assistants are related successively.

The greatest novelty in these chapters is the inclusion of a producer, which office is usually omitted in most amateur play staffs. This individual should be well versed in all aspects of the theatre, and should not only relieve

In the opening chapters, I have stated my reasons for attempting this work, and have given a brief account of the background which has made it possible. I have then dealt with suggestions concerning the actual organization of an amateur dramatic association. I have suggested the form for a constitution, a limited number of officers, and a plan for beginning activity with informal meetings presented exclusively for the club members.

Next, I have made suggestions concerning the formation of a reading committee for the selection of a play for which to produce. The latter has responsibilities of the local audience, the difficulties of acting and staging, suggestions as to types of plays and, even more specifically, titles of certain one-act plays, have all been included. Chapters 7 through 11 deal with the production responsibilities of the association from or connected with the necessary for the association as a professional production. The duties of the producer, the director, the stage designer, the electrician, the property manager, the stage manager and other business responsibilities, and the

business manager and the assistant are treated successively. The greatest novelty in these chapters is the inclusion of a producer, which office is usually omitted in most amateur play scripts. This individual should be well versed in all aspects of the theatre, and should not only select

the director of many of the responsibilities which are usually heaped upon him, but should act as a coordinator of all activities, and as a liaison officer between the play production staff and the club itself.

The next two chapters are concerned with the actual performance. Particular insistence is given to the desirability of conducting the dress rehearsal in precisely the same manner as if a paying audience were present. There is no better insurance for a professional-looking final offering than the strict adherence to this suggestion. All problems of lighting, scene design, timing, and action should be worked out before the final rehearsal. In the event that any new ideas occur to any of the observers during this rehearsal, they should be noted and, if practical, put into effect before the play is finally performed, but the dress rehearsal should never be interrupted in order to make immediate changes.

Many apparently minor details have been included in the chapter devoted to the public presentation of a play. Suggestions are made as to the conduct of everyone from the ushers to the most insignificant stage hand during the entire period from the moment when the house is opened to the public until after the last curtain call. Some of these may seem to be petty and insignificant, but the hard and serious work of a majority of amateur players is frequently

the director of many of the responsibilities which are
usually heaped upon him, but which are as a coordinator of
all activities, and as a liaison officer between the play
production staff and the club itself.

The next two speakers were concerned with the actual
production. Particularly the former is devoted to the play-
ing of the drama, the drama rehearsal in particular, the
stage manager as it is a very important person. There is
a great deal of importance for a professional-looking play other
than the stage rehearsal to this committee. All
aspects of lighting, sound design, timing, and action
should be worked out before the final rehearsal. In the
event of any new ideas coming to any of the directors for
the final rehearsal, they should be noted and, if practical,
put into effect before the play is finally rehearsed, but
the final rehearsal should never be interrupted in order to
make technical changes.

Some suggestions which details have been included in
the section devoted to the public presentation of a play.
However, some are taken as to the conduct of everyone from the
actors to the most insignificant stage hand during the
entire period from the moment when the house is opened to
the public until after the last curtain call. Some of these
may seem to be petty and insignificant, but the fact that
actions work of a majority of amateur players is frequently

marred by failure to give advance consideration to these seemingly minor points.

The work is concluded with short chapters on the necessity of keeping enthusiasm alive after a public production has been completed until such time as all scenery, properties, lighting equipment, and other items have been properly dismantled and returned to their owners or stored away for future performances. A recurring thought which is frequently mentioned throughout the book is that no expenditure should be made nor any construction accomplished without a thought for adaptability to future performances. A final word of emphasis is given on the necessity of looking forward to the future of the organization by attempting to gauge audience reaction, and a few brief suggestions are made concerning an expansion of efforts once the organization has firmly established itself as a part of the community.

turned by failure to give advance consideration to these
 necessary minor points.
 The work is continued with about equal vigor on the
 necessity of keeping enthusiasm alive after a certain period
 from has been completed until such time as all necessary
 properties, financial equipment, and other items have been
 properly distributed and returned to their owners or stored
 away for future performances. A recurring theme which is
 repeatedly mentioned throughout the book is that no experi-
 ment should be made nor any suggestion associated with-
 out a thorough and adequate knowledge of the necessary
 financial word of necessity is given on the necessity of looking
 forward to the future of the organization by attending
 to every advance condition, and a last brief paragraph
 made concerning an expansion of efforts once the organiza-
 tion has fully established itself as a part of the com-

mentally

BIBLIOGRAPHY

General Sources

Gerrin-Mayer, Harold, and Edward C. Gold, Handbook for the Theatre. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1938

It is difficult to conceive of a more complete coverage of the matter of scenery design and construction. Although portions of the work are beyond the scope of most student groups--any club would gain much from this book.

Gurten, Jean, and Jean Gurten, Everyman's Drama. New York: American Association for Adult Education, 1938

This book contains a good resume of different types of non-professional or semi-professional theatre groups in the United States, as well as many helpful hints concerning the organization and activities of a successful club.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Grafton, Allen, Play Directing. New York: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1938

Here is a complete treatment of methods for directing amateur actors.

Jones, Leslie Allen, Scenic Design and Model Building. Boston: Walter B. Eaker Co., 1938

A more complete and detailed treatment of the subject of model building could not be asked.

McGonigle, Stanley, A History of Lighting the Stage. New York: Theatre Arts, Inc., 1938

This is an advanced study of stage lighting, but just for some amateur readers.

Reiss, Benjamin, A Primer of Stagecraft. New York: Drama-Club's Play Service, 1941

In accordance with its title, this book is really a primer. It begins with the most elementary conditions, and does not become too complicated for the amateur.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Burris-Meyer, Harold, and Edward C. Cole, Scenery for the Theatre. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1938

It is difficult to conceive of a more complete coverage of the matter of scenery design and construction. Although portions of the work are beyond the scope of most amateur groups--any club would gain much from this book.

Carter, Jean, and Jess Ogden, Everyman's Drama. New York: American Association for Adult Education, 1938

This book contains a good resumé of different types of non-professional or semi-professional theatre groups in the United States, as well as many helpful hints concerning the organization and activities of a successful club.

Crafton, Allen, Play Directing. New York: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1938

Here is a complete treatment of methods for directing amateur actors.

Jones, Leslie Allen, Scenic Design and Model Building. Boston: Walter H. Baker Co., 1939

A more complete and detailed treatment of the subject of model building could not be asked.

McCandless, Stanley, A Method of Lighting the Stage. New York: Theatre Arts, Inc., 1939

This is an advanced study of stage lighting, too deep for many amateur readers.

Nelms, Henning, A Primer of Stagecraft. New York: Dramatists' Play Service, 1941

In accordance with its title, this book is really a primer. It begins with the most elementary considerations, and does not become too complicated for the amateur.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Hunter-Wagner, Harold, and Edward E. Cole, Secretary for the
Teacher, Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1938

It is difficult to conceive of a more complete survey
 one of the matter of necessary teaching and organization.
 Although portions of the work are beyond the scope of
 most teacher groups--any club would gain much from
 this book.

Gardner, Jean, and Vera Cohen, Experiments in Drama, New York:
 American Association for Adult Education, 1938

This book contains a good record of different types of
 non-professional or semi-professional theatre groups
 in the United States, as well as many helpful ideas
 concerning the organization and activities of a group--
 for class.

Trachten, Alice, Play Direction, New York: Prentice-Hall
 Inc., 1938

There is a complete treatment of methods for directing
 amateur actors.

Jones, Leslie Allen, Leslie Allen and Model Building,
 Boston: Walter H. Baker Co., 1938

A more complete and detailed treatment of the subject
 of model building could not be asked.

McNally, Jennifer, A Method of Teaching the Bible, New
 York: Theatre Arts, Inc., 1938

This is an advanced study of Bible teaching, too deep
 for many amateur readers.

Reine, Jennifer, A Primer of Dramatics, New York: Drama-
 tists' Play Service, 1931

In accordance with the title, this book is really a
 primer. It begins with the most elementary considera-
 tions, and does not become too complicated for the
 amateur.

Shaw, Bernard, The Art of Rehearsal. New York: Samuel French, 1928

This booklet should be read by every director of amateurs and professionals alike.

Sobel, Bernard, editor, The Theatre Handbook and Digest of Plays. New York: Crown Publishers, 1940

This is an excellent reference book for anything related to the theatre. It contains an extensive alphabetized list of play condensations, theatrical terms, and theatrical personages from Aeschylus to O'Neill.

Southern, Richard, Proscenium and Sight Lines. London: Faber & Faber, Ltd., 1940

This book should be kept in mind for the use of the group which is remodeling or building its own theatre.

Webster, Glenn R., and William Wetzel, Scenery Simplified. New York: Theatre Arts, Inc., 1939

Here is an excellent source of practical short cuts for those working with limited equipment and small budgets.

Shaw, Bernard. The Art of Conversation. New York: Random House, 1932.

This booklet should be read by every director of amateur and professional alike.

Sobel, Bernard, editor. The Theatre Handbook. New York: Crown Publishers, 1930.

This is an excellent reference book for anyone interested in the theatre. It contains an extensive list of references of play organizations, theatrical plays, and theatrical references from beginning to O'Neill.

Southern, Richard. Production and Stage Lines. London: Faber & Faber, 1930.

This book should be kept in mind for the use of the group which is remodeling or building its own theatre.

Webster, Glenn E., and Milton Walter. Scenery Simplified. New York: Theatre Arts, Inc., 1938.

Here is an excellent source of practical advice for those working with limited equipment and small budgets.

Secondary Sources

Barrows, Alice, and Lee Simonson, The School Auditorium as a Theatre. The U. S. Dept. of the Interior, Office of Education, Bulletin No. 4, 1939

For those who are discouraged with the errors in planning of the stage they must use, this book should be heartening for it gives many statistics and much information on stages which are inconceivably bad.

Burleigh, Louise, The Community Theatre. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1917

Much still of value in organizing and improvising is contained in this volume.

Holmes, Ruth V., Model-Theatre Craft. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1940

A complete treatment of the construction of stage models.

Krows, Arthur E., Play Production in America, New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1916

This contains some information which might be of value to amateurs despite the fact that it was published thirty years ago. Most problems, however, are taken up from the professional point of view.

MacGowan, Kenneth, Footlights Across America. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1929

"An attempt to estimate the extent, nature, and significance of the non-commercial theatre of America." The chapter on "Professionalizing the Amateur Theatre" is particularly practical.

_____, The Theatre of Tomorrow, New York: Boni, Liveright, 1921

This is largely concerned with theory and experiment. It is concerned with such things as revolving, sliding, sinking, wagon stages, etc., and is an impractical work for amateurs.

Secondary Sources

Barrows, Alice, and Lee Stinson, The School Auditor as a Theorist, The U. S. Dept. of the Interior, Office of Reclamation, Bulletin No. 4, 1932.

For those who are interested with the error in plan-
ning of the state, they may use, this book should be
interesting for it gives many statistics and much labor-
saving on stages which are increasingly bad.

Burleigh, Louise, The Community Theatre, Boston: Little,
Brown and Co., 1931.

Each staff of value in organizing and investigating is
contained in this volume.

Collier, Ruth V., Model-Theatre Craft, New York: Frederick
A. Stokes Co., 1931.

A complete treatment of the construction of stage
sets.

Crane, Arthur E., Play Production in America, New York:
Henry Holt & Co., 1916.

This contains some information which might be of value
to students outside the fact that it was compiled
thirty years ago. Most problems, however, are taken
up from the professional point of view.

MacGowan, Kenneth, Footlights Across America, New York:
Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1932.

"An attempt to estimate the extent, nature, and sig-
nificance of the non-commercial theatre of America."
The chapter on "Professionalizing the Amateur Theatre"
is particularly practical.

The Theatre of Tomorrow, New York: Bond,
Livestock, 1931.

This is largely concerned with theory and experiment.
It is concerned with such things as revivals, editing,
singing, woven stages, etc., and is an interesting
work for students.

Mantle, Burns, editor, Best Plays of 1919-1920 (and subsequent seasons to the present), New York: Dodd, Mead & Co.

This series gives condensed versions of all Broadway successes of each season.

Moderwell, Hiram K., The Theatre of Today. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1923

This is a good picture of the American theatre twenty years ago, but of little value to one seeking practical guidance.

Sayler, Oliver M., Our American Theatre. New York: Brentano's, 1923

This gives an account of the non-professional theatre in America twenty years ago, classified into institutional, civic, college, and Little Theatre movements. Much of it is still pertinent.

Stratton, Clarence, Producing in Little Theatres. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1921

This book is valuable mainly for the lists of plays suitable for amateurs with brief commentaries on each, many royalty-free.

_____, Theatron. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1928

An interesting illustrated account of theatres, large and small, professional and amateur, throughout the United States, with accounts of what has been done with certain plays.

Southern, Richard, Stage-Setting for Amateurs and Professionals. London: Faber & Faber, Ltd., 1937

This book is all-inclusive in its scope. Much of it is too advanced for most amateur groups.

Levin, Boris, editor, Best Plays of 1919-1920 (and subsequent seasons to the present), New York: Dodd, Mead & Co.

This series gives condensed versions of all Broadway successes of each season.

Roberts, Hiram K., The Theatre of Today, New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1922

This is a good picture of the American theatre twenty years ago, but of little value to one seeking present-day conditions.

Spicer, Oliver, The American Theatre, New York: Macmillan, 1922

This gives an account of the non-professional theatre in America twenty years ago, classified into institutional, civic, college, and little theatre movements. Much of it is still pertinent.

Stratton, Clarence, Production in Little Theatre, New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1921

This book is valuable mainly for the lists of plays suitable for amateur theatrical companies on each, many reprints.

Theatre, New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1920

An interesting illustrated account of theatre, large and small, professional and amateur, throughout the United States, with accounts of what has been done with certain plays.

Southey, Richard, Home-Letting for Amateurs and Professionals, London: Faber & Faber, Ltd., 1921

This book is all-inclusive in its scope, much of it is too advanced for most amateur groups.

Publishers of Plays for Amateur Dramatic Clubs

Baker's Plays, 178 Tremont Street, Boston 11, Mass.

Samuel French, Inc., 25 West 45th Street, New York, N. Y.

Longmans Green & Co., 114 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.

Theatrical Supply Catalogs

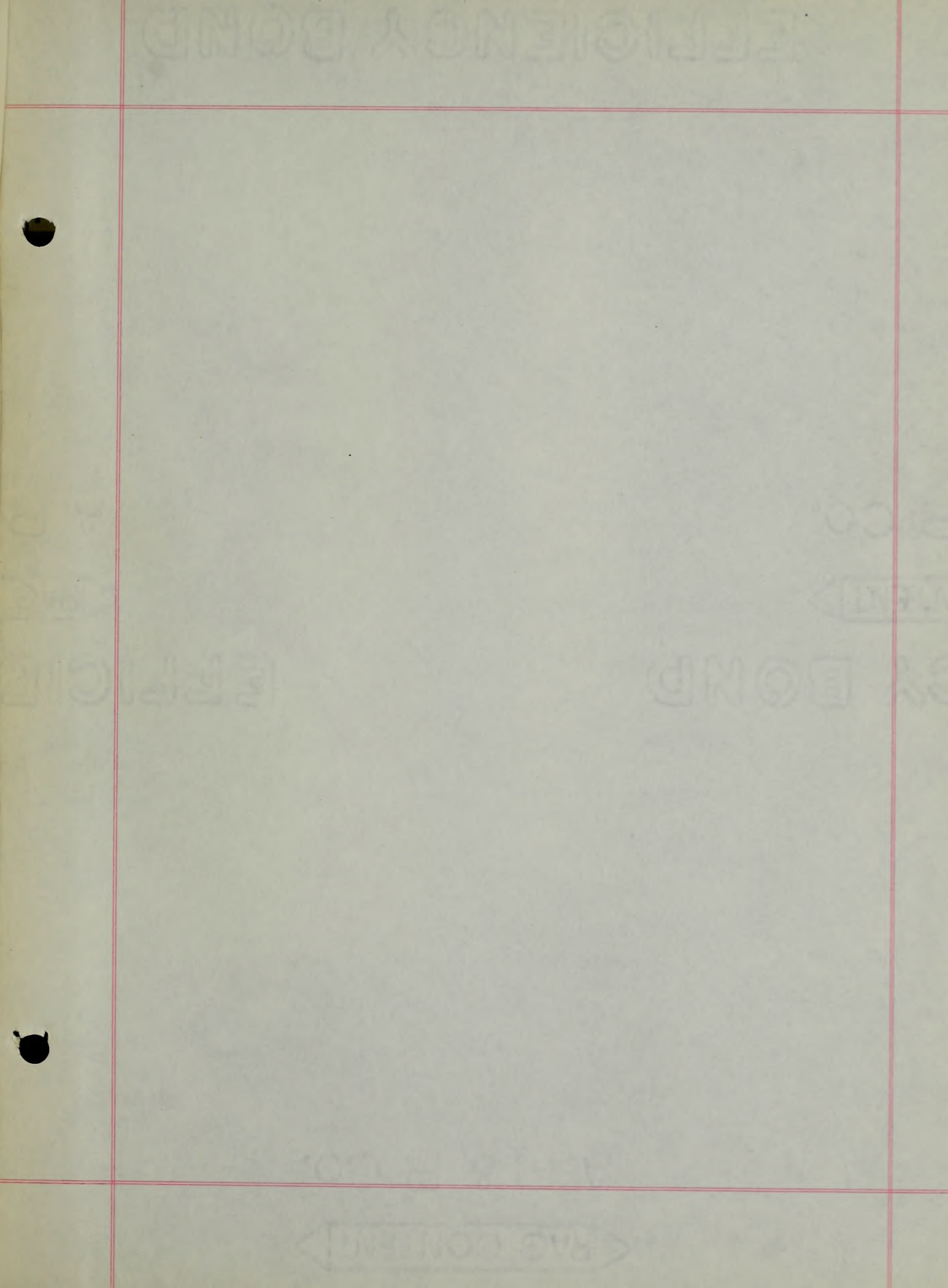
Cleon Throckmorton, Inc., 102 West Third St., New York, N. Y.

Publishers of Plays for Amateur Dramatic Clubs

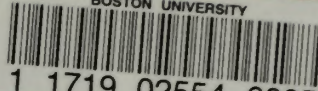
Baker's Plays, 115 Tremont Street, Boston 11, Mass.
 General Theatre, Inc., 25 West 43rd Street, New York, N. Y.
 Southern Opera Co., 114 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.

Theatrical Supply Houses

Clow Macdonald, Inc., 102 West 43rd St., New York, N. Y.



BOSTON UNIVERSITY



1 1719 02554 6005



ACCOPRESS BINDER

BF 250-P7 EMB

MADE BY

ACCO PRODUCTS, INC.

OGDENSBURG, N. Y.

